WHERE FREEDOM PERISHED

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

THE UNITY OF EUROPE

WHERE FREEDOM PERISHED

by

HILDA MONTE

With a Foreword by

JENNIE LEE

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Für Margit und Karl Pernetz

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ONE OF THE UNDERGROUND FIGHTERS speaks. His name is Walter. He used to travel in Germany from district to district, keeping illegal groups in touch with each other, and in touch also with the outside world, because he travelled abroad at frequent intervals. And abroad he tried to convince the world of what a dreadful enemy the Nazi was to mankind, and what the Nazi way of life was doing to the people of Germany.

Walter is now a refugee—fighting on against Hitler within the ranks of the United Nations. He speaks to them about the common people of Germany, about Nazis and about his comrades who are continuing the underground struggle.

FOREWORD

In the spring of 1945, Hilda Monte was trapped and killed by an S.S. frontier guard while trying to cross from Austria to Switzerland. She was then barely thirty years old. The pity and the waste of it was that this was the last secret mission into enemy territory she need have undertaken, for the war was almost over.

This young anti-fascist had a veteran's record in dangerous underground activities. At fifteen she was writing for the Berlin Socialist daily paper, *Der Funke*. Two years later, in 1933, when Hitler seized power, the paper was suppressed. Hilda Monte was one of those who devised new ways of publishing and distributing it through illegal anti-fascist groups. Later, in danger of her life, she had to leave Germany, came to England, married an Englishman and might have settled down to a sheltered life as writer and lecturer on international political and economic affairs.

Instead, she maintained her contacts with the German underground, smuggled literature and information to her comrades there, warned those in danger and helped to provide them with means of escape. When the war broke out she volunteered to continue this hazardous work. With forged passport, carrying material that she knew meant, if she were discovered, imprisonment, torture, death, Hilda Monte again and again walked alone across the frontier separating the fascist and free world.

By birth Hungarian Jewish middle class, her parents had planned a very different kind of life for her. They did all they could to persuade her to stick to her studies as painter and sculptor. She had considerable artistic talent, but in a threatened world her sensitive, restless spirit could find no peace in those ways. The life she chose makes nonsense of racial, national, economic frontiers. Hilda Monte understood that the one way out of the darkness lay in strengthening everywhere the forces working for international Socialism.

Her comrades were those who shared her faith, whatever their race or nationality.

One of her friends who worked with her in the German underground writes from war and hunger-blitzed Cologne to say that in the margin of one of her books there is a marked passage that tells something about Hilda herself. The book, written about Clemenceau by his secretary, Martet, contains a conversation with someone who asked Clemenceau whether, after a *coup d'état*, he would be given an important position. Clemenceau replied: "No, you have no faith in anything. Without faith one cannot fight."

Hilda Monte had great faith. She fought superbly. It is something that before her death she was happy in the knowledge that the war was practically over and Hitler beaten. But what would be her mood if she were alive to-day and knew the present sufferings of her comrades of yesterday's German underground and of the ordinary German people whom she knew too well to condemn outright?

We know too little of the inwardness of German life during the pre-war Nazi era and during the war. This novel is uniquely welcome both for its subject and for the added knowledge it gives us of one of the most civilised, informed and compassionate women of our time.

JENNIE LEE.

CHAPTER I

HOME

MOTHER HAS A COTTAGE in the forest, a long way out of town. Two bedrooms, a living-room and a kitchen. Considering that there were six of us children and that most of the time we had friends staying with us, you might call it overcrowded. But we were fond of it all the same. There is a garden, with a large old apple tree, and some plum trees and cherry trees, and some fir trees as well, and you don't know exactly where the garden ends and the forest begins. Mother grows vegetables and plenty of flowers. She does not separate the different kinds from each other. Sweet peas, daisies, pansies, carrots and cress, cauliflower, cabbage and lilies, carnations and asters are all mixed together, and the whole looks like a tropical wilderness, abounding with life and colour. In between there are a good many weeds; mother does not like to pull them up, because she feels it is not fair to them. And there are all sorts of mosses and wild flowers and other plants which she brings home from the forests and meadows. That is mother's garden.

She is rather like it herself. She cares for her children and her numerous friends in very much the same way that she cares for the plants in her garden; she helps them grow, but she lets them grow in their own way. To her, freedom is all important—and I don't merely mean freedom from the bondage of a police State. Freedom, as she understands it, includes independence from the set rules of society, independence from "what is done" and "what the neighbours will say," and "What can I get out of this or that?" "Fear, prejudice and greed, they are what prevent people being free," Mother would say. You can't be good unless you are beyond their power; for otherwise your decisions and judgments are

not really your own. She has always hated a social order based on the fear, prejudice and greed of the mass of the people, and raising insurmountable barriers between people of different races, nations and classes.

And mother has the courage of her convictions. She has never made any concessions to the Nazis. She would sooner swallow her tongue than say "*Heil, Hitler!*" She would sooner cut her arm off than raise it to salute the brown murder gangs. She has never contributed a single penny to a Nazi collection, nor has she ever bought a single Nazi publication or joined any of their organisations. One day they came to decorate her with the "Mother's Cross," because she has presented six children to the State. Mother looked at the cross, and then at the Nazi agent who offered it to her, and, smiling pityingly, she shook her head. "You take that back with you," she said earnestly. "I had my children to please myself, not the State. And I don't think," she added, "the State is so very grateful for them either. One of them is in prison, one in exile, our Walter you consider to be politically unreliable, the other three are still too small." The agent seemed to be impressed with her fearlessness, and nothing further was done about the matter.

Mother does not care about appearances. She does not worry about money so long as she has enough to satisfy our most urgent needs. She does not worry about fashion, nor does she read novels or go to the pictures. Her house is clean and fairly tidy in a rather superficial manner; it would not have satisfied a good housewife. She knows how to feed hungry stomachs within the narrow limits of her means; but I must admit that her meals are not particularly tasty. She thinks it matters very little what you eat and how you are dressed, and what your rooms look like. The essential thing is to be happy and good, and that does not depend upon the taste of your food and the style of your dress. To her what matters is that all should have an opportunity of being happy, and that is why she is opposed to class divisions and Fascist terror and war. She has seen her children sent to prison or forced to emigrate on account of political convictions which she did not share; but

at any rate they were fighting against injustice, and so she never complained about the worry they were causing her. She found it much more difficult to settle down to the idea that my younger brothers and my little sister could interest themselves in film stars, clothes, dances, types of motor cars and aeroplanes, and detective stories—things which did not matter, which were outside her world, which seemed to place her children on a planet that was closed to her.

Mother has rather a romantic past. She is the daughter of a very wealthy industrialist. She ran away from home when she was sixteen, and married a coal-miner. He was killed in the first months of the First World War, and left her with three children. I am the oldest and when my father died I was six, my sister was three and my little brother two. She found work in a cotton mill, but they soon sacked her because she was carrying on propaganda against the war in general, and against profiteers in particular. She asked her workmates why they put up with having their sons and husbands killed at the front while some of the patriots at home were reaping golden harvests from their deaths. After she had been sacked for the third time she got a job as a charwoman in a business house. There she had little opportunity of agitating against the war, because she hardly met anyone. And so she kept that job until the end of the war.

Later she lived with a violinist, who managed to exist miserably enough by playing in café orchestras and in park bands at holiday resorts. Every few months he had to move to another town, and Mother went with him along with us children. She had three more children during those years. We never had a permanent home and never really had enough to eat. But that wasn't what worried Mother most. What she found much harder to bear was that he was nervy and irritable with us. More often than not we had only one room to live in, and naturally the noise that six children would make must be rather too much for a man who is trying to devote himself to music. I can understand that now. But we were kids then, and we hated him when he lost his temper when it obviously wasn't our fault. Besides he wanted us three elder

ones to learn to play the violin, and he took our toys away and forced us to practise several hours every day until we hated the violin. Mother was helpless.

And then it so happened that his capacities were recognised and he became famous. All of a sudden there was plenty of money in the house—something Mother had probably never experienced since she left her parents. But with money and fame came something else: the obligation of taking a place in "society," of leading a bourgeois life, submitting to bourgeois standards, concentrating on unimportant things and therefore necessarily neglecting others which matter. For Mother the very idea was unbearable. She could not be the wife of a man who was about to climb the social ladder: she could not do it because it would make her feel she was betraying her past and her children and returning to the emptiness from which she fled when she left her parents' house.

So she went away with her six children, into the cottage in the forest, which he bought for her. She obtained a scanty pension from the State, because her first husband, my father, was killed in the war. She grew fruit and potatoes and other vegetables in her garden, and every morning she went out to work as a charwoman. Not only did she manage to clothe and feed her children, she was soon able to help others as well. Mother would pick up acquaintances and we would bring our friends home, and they came again, with or without an invitation, always sure of a welcome. Mother never fussed about visitors—in fact, she just treated them as though they were part of the family, and they came to us almost in the same way as if they were going home.

As a rule Mother invited people to our house because she liked them. But sometimes she did it even though she disliked them; sometimes she invited them just because she fancied that it would do them good to feel they were at home somewhere. That is how Ivan came to us.

Mother had been at the hospital to see Sam, a friend of ours. Sam told us that another patient at the hospital, a foreigner, had been upset and depressed when he saw Mother looking after Sam in such a motherly way, although he was not

her son at all; while he, Ivan, was alone and had nobody to look after him. The next visiting day Mother went to see Ivan and took him some fruit and flowers from the garden, and she told him that he might come and stay with us if he thought that would help him to get better. Afterwards Mother admitted to me that she did not really like Ivan when she saw him in hospital; she invited him only because she was sorry for him.

Ivan was the son of a poor, illiterate Slovakian peasant. At home there was no work and no food for him, but he didn't mind, because he wanted to see the world, anyway. But what he did see was mainly hospitals. He suffered from a scrofulous disease which made his hair fall out and covered the whole of his face and scalp with some sort of a rash. When he was discharged from the hospital in Prague, after a two months' stay, he came to Germany. But when he got to our town, he fell sick again, and this time they kept him in hospital almost six months. And that is where Mother came across him.

For a long time I could not make out whether Mother afterwards got to like him. She was very good to him, and yet she seemed to be a little less affectionate towards him than to most of the others. I was not at home a lot at that time, but my brothers and sisters adored Ivan. He played with them, and carved little dolls and ships from wood, and told them stories about eastern countries, about Czechoslovakia and his father's farm, and about the great country still farther east, where everything was wonderful and everybody happy.

Ivan was a Communist, and he had a strong influence on the children. My two little brothers joined the Communist children's organisation, and they had little Ruth enrolled in it when she first went to school at the age of six. The kids refused to go to a progressive school, because they wanted to form Communist cells in the infant classes at the local elementary school. In the afternoons and evenings they went to meetings or God knows what. Mother very rarely interfered with what they were doing. But I noticed more than once that she did not like it.

And yet people used to think that Mother herself was a

Communist. You couldn't have believed that if you knew her. It is true that, for a short period just before Hitler came to power, she was a member of a local women's organisation which may have been under Communist leadership; she joined it in order to do her bit in the fight against the Nazis. But she would never have believed in or submitted to any Party dogma. It would have restricted her freedom to do at every moment exactly what she herself thought she ought to do.

But Kate and Rudi, my sister and brother, were soon working wholeheartedly in the cause of the Communist Party. Rudi became district leader of the Young Communist League, and Kate was invited to spend three months in Soviet Russia. Ivan, who continued to live at our house in the intervals between his frequent spells in hospital, was made the editor of a paper which the Party issued for circulation amongst the farmers. Mother helped them all in their work, and many Party comrades were at our house at one time or another. They wanted her to join the Party, and could not understand why she refused.

"They don't distinguish between right and wrong," she explained to me once; "they only distinguish between useful and harmful. They can never be wrong as long as they manage to justify their actions as being in the interests of the revolution. And, of course, they themselves interpret what is and what isn't in the interests of the revolution. And they have no respect for the truth. They say it is bourgeois prejudice to believe in Truth and Justice. But to me it seems to be only that the bourgeois are hypocritical when they use these expressions, which are really quite revolutionary. No, I shall never be a Bolshevik. I don't mind so much if the children are in it," she added after a while. "They are still at the age when the world is like an open countryside; they need only read a map to be able to get anywhere they like. And to some extent every adult is suspect to them because he can't face life in the same lighthearted fashion. They think it will be safe always to do the opposite of what they were taught at school. They will find out in a few years' time how little they really know. Anyway, I don't want to interfere with them."

With Ivan Mother seemed to discuss the Party a good deal. He was much more critical about it than Kate and Rudi, for whom every word emanating from Party Headquarters was like the Gospel.

On her trip to Russia Kate met Fernand, and soon after her return she went to join him in Berlin. Rudi remained at home, but he was so busy that little was seen of him. It was Ivan who was closest to Mother in the two years before Hitler came to power, and gradually a real friendship seemed to develop between the two.

But in 1933, Ivan also had to leave the house in the forest. He was too well known in the district. He went into hiding in town and continued to publish his paper illegally. I believe Mother assisted him in its distribution. Several times the Brownshirts and police called at our house, but they found nobody they were looking for. They searched the house, took some books and pamphlets with them, that was all.

It must have been in the third or fourth month of the Nazi régime when one day Ivan sent Mother a message that he would be coming that evening. That very day the police called and asked for him again. My two little brothers, Gert and Tom, aged eleven and twelve, at once left by the backdoor and started patrolling the two roads by which Ivan might come. They remained at their posts for nearly three hours. Then Gert met Ivan, and told him that the police were after him. Ivan disappeared, and the two boys came home. But in spite of the warning, Ivan tried to come to our house that same night. We never discovered why he did it. The police were still waiting for him and arrested him triumphantly.

Bit by bit we learned the rest of the story. They found a paper on Ivan from which they concluded that he had an appointment on Friday at 4 p.m. They wanted him to give particulars. He refused. The Nazis took shifts at "cross-examining" him, throughout the night and the next day. By the second morning—that was Thursday—all his teeth had been knocked out, and he couldn't sit down or lie on his back, so badly had he been knocked about. On the floor and walls of

the cellar in which the "cross-examination" was proceeding, his blood was mingled with that of earlier victims of the brown terrorists. He heard men scream with pain in neighbouring rooms, and horribly distorted bodies were carried past him, twitching in the convulsions of agony or delivered from their sufferings by death. One more attempt was made to make Ivan speak. They hung him up by his feet, and left him there, head downwards. They had to carry him into his cell afterwards, because he couldn't walk. But when he came to himself again he still did not speak. They locked him in and left him alone. That evening and again next morning, they gave him some food. And then they fetched him from the cell, and he was taken to the barber, who shaved him, and they gave him a clean shirt and his coat. They asked no more questions. But they ordered him to go and meet his friends at 4 p.m. at the appointed place. He was to go in his ordinary clothes, and without guard or shackles. He need not believe, however, that it would be of any use trying to run away. They would be there all the time, and keep an eye on him, and he would have to pay dearly for the attempt.

Ivan went through the streets, very slowly, very conscious of the fact that he might never again walk as freely as this, and undecided still what to do to avoid betraying his comrades, but at the same time, if possible, to escape further torture. He knew that there was no way out for him. So when he got near the corner where his friends were waiting for him, he threw himself into the roadway in front of a fast-moving car.

When he woke up he was in hospital, with both his legs, his right arm and head heavily bandaged. His legs were broken, his arm and head were badly bruised.

He was well treated in hospital, and after two months' time he could walk again. Very soon they would throw him into prison again. He knew it, and was so terrified that he decided to put an end to his life rather than face a repetition of that dreadful experience. But it turned out otherwise. One day he was discharged. At first he did not understand what it all meant. Only gradually it dawned on him what was happening. Somebody else who also had a foreign-sounding

name was due to be discharged. The nurses liked Ivan, and they knew what was in store for him. So they just made a mistake and let him go.

We helped him to cross the frontier into Czechoslovakia the next day, and from there he made his way to Soviet Russia.

In Soviet Russia he was shot three years later as an "agent of the Gestapo" and a saboteur of socialist construction.

. . . . .

Rudi saved himself from arrest by going into exile to Paris. Three months after Hitler's rise to power, Kate came home. Fernand had been arrested in the night of the Reichstag Fire. She had news of the horrible illtreatment he had suffered, and was not sure whether he was still alive. They kept him in a concentration camp for two and a half years. When he was released Kate was in hiding because the Gestapo were after her; she was said to be "continuing the work of an illegal organisation." It was a long time before Fernand succeeded in finding out where she had hidden herself. Before the two could meet Kate was arrested by the Gestapo. She was sentenced to three years' penal servitude.

Fernand emigrated to Prague.

Thus Mother's life has changed a lot since the beginning of the Third Reich. She was left alone with her three smaller children, and there was no longer the same lively atmosphere in the house. Most of her old friends have been arrested, or have emigrated or gone to other parts of the Reich. There are many, too, who think it too dangerous for them to go to the "den of Bolshevism," as some of the local Nazis used to call our house. Sometimes Mother takes it into her head that one or other of those who used to come to our house might be in need of help. Then she sets out to find them. Somebody may warn her: "Don't go to So-and-so's house; the Secret Police are watching him." But Mother does not care. She arranges to do one comrade's washing or to come as a charwoman to the other, and that provides an excuse for keeping in regular touch with them, and taking messages from one place to the other. Relatives of imprisoned friends of ours sometimes come to see Mother to talk things over with her.

So you couldn't say she was no longer active. But she isn't active in the same sense as she used to be; she lacks her old vigour. The whole of her behaviour has become more mechanical. That must be her way of reacting to the desperateness of the situation.

When the Nazis came to power she consoled herself with the belief that it would all be over in six months' time at the most, that these were the death pangs of a moribund social order, and that soon the way would be clear for a brighter future. When I was a little dubious as to the accuracy of her estimate, she got quite hot and almost angry: "You will see that I'm right!"

But she was not. And gradually she was forced to admit it. That meant more than correcting an error. It meant taking a fundamentally different view of the horrors of the Nazi system. It is as if you are tormented by a painful disease; you put up with it readily enough when you are sure that it will soon be over, that it is just a momentary agony. But when the agony fails to loosen its grip, and you don't know when it will cease, it wears you down. It is not so much the pain itself as your horror of the pain which drives you to despair. That is how the Nazi system weighed on Mother. No doubt she was revolted by it from the very start; but her faith in the coming of a new order was so strong and vivid that in her own imagination she was almost living in that future already, and the actuality was rather like a dreadful dream. It was bound to take some time before she convinced herself that the nightmare was reality, and that the better future was a long way off. It was no good arguing with her about it; I soon saw that. It was not a matter of logical understanding. It was a matter of gaining the strength to enable her to bear the horrible truth without breaking down under its weight, the truth that a prolonged period of Nazi barbarism was humanly possible. There are plenty of people, of course, who have been able to bear the burden of that truth without breaking down under it, and their strength is no greater than Mother's. But do they really bear the full weight of the truth? Do they actually realise what Nazi rule means? To Mother it means so much

more than her own fate and that of her children and friends. It was not so much the injuries of individuals which made Mother suffer. It was rather the degradation that the whole nation accepted when it submitted to the rule of barbarous gangsters. And even that is not quite all. The fact that human beings are actually capable of behaving as the Nazis do, that they are capable of perverting all the achievements of modern technique and science and even art to nothing but evil and criminal ends, she found this very fact a humiliating one. How can I explain myself? Those who commit the horrors and those who submit to them, they all have human features, and this degrades the face of man. Something of this degradation would remain, even if the Nazis were swept off the face of the earth to-morrow. They would leave the memory of the depths to which the human race can sink, and who could then be sure that such a degree of baseness could never be reached again by others?

And yet Mother still retained her faith in a better future. But it was remote now, a dim and distant future, and it didn't shed a great deal of light into her life. Only at this period did I realise how essential an ingredient this light had been in Mother's personality. I missed it in her glance, her smile, her movements. People said that she was getting old. Yet it has not been the years that have sapped her strength, but the decay of civilisation which she has witnessed. Most people take events more calmly and less seriously than Mother does. Had this not been so, they wouldn't have submitted to the terror; they would have revolted against it and faced the consequences. Or they would have gone mad.

Mother appears to have grown old. Yet occasionally by some spontaneous reaction she shows that the light in her has not been completely extinguished, that the remarkable vigour and energy she used to have are not dead. One day, for instance, she happened to look through an old newspaper which somebody had left in the house; and there she saw that a comrade whom she had known years ago had been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. He was a Jew. When I came home she asked if I knew about the sentence. Yes, I did.

"His two brothers were killed in the World War," she said. "He is the last, and his mother is still alive." Mother was on the point of going to see the old lady and tell her—what could she tell her? That she had known her son, and that she knew what it meant. "Do you know that she lives in ——?" I asked her.

"How do you think you could get there?"

"Oh, just hitch-hiking," she replied seriously. "Didn't I always travel that way?"

But then I suggested that the old lady might be very suspicious if a stranger came to talk to her about her son, that she might even refuse to see her.

"It's understandable in these days," I added. "Especially when you remember that she is Jewish."

So Mother said she would think it over again, and I believe that in the end she didn't go. But she would be perfectly capable of leaving her home and children and travelling from one end of Germany to the other, just to say a few comforting words to a stranger who might be in need of them! And that convinces me that, essentially, Mother has not changed.

CHAPTER II

RETURN FROM PRISON

I WENT HOME SHORTLY before leaving the country for the last time; but I did not know then that I should have to go away again so soon. I had not seen Mother for over two years. There had been trouble with the Secret Police at that time, and many of our friends were arrested, while others, including myself, were obliged to go abroad.

When I returned to Germany I was not sure at first whether it would be safe to show myself in an area in which I was fairly well known. But when I found that the Gestapo did not appear to be taking much notice of me I considered that there was no longer any danger in going home.

Two weeks before my arrival, my sister Kate had been released from prison. Mother was quite happy. It was the first time for many years that as many as five of her six children were at home at the same time.

Kate has many of Mother's traits. She too has that fearless and straightforward manner; but while Mother's actions are largely impulsive Kate's mind works more logically. She even appears to be afraid to act in accordance with her feelings, and as a result there is a certain harshness in her manner which some people dislike. With others, again, she is surprisingly quick in establishing cordial relations. Her choice of friends is rather odd at times, but, although I am used to surprises in that respect, I was absolutely aghast when I saw her chatting and shaking hands with a policeman. And that is what I did see on the way from the station when I came home on that last visit. When crossing the main road, I happened to notice her standing with a bicycle at the next turning, talking to a policeman. The first idea that flashed through my mind was that they were already arresting her

again. But then I noticed that they were chatting in a very friendly manner and they shook hands before my sister rode away on her bicycle.

You may find it difficult over here to understand how we feel about policemen in Germany. We were not inclined to trust them even in the old days before the Nazis came to power, but now we never expect them to be anything but enemies. So I was extremely puzzled by the incident I had witnessed.

Kate was highly amused when I challenged her on the matter as soon as she came home. She told me what had happened.

Riding her bike, she had violated the new traffic regulations in some way. The policeman stopped her and told her off. She said she knew nothing of these regulations, having only just been discharged from prison. The policeman was so much taken aback by this blunt admission that he forgot all about the Highway Code. He asked her what they had locked her up for and she explained that she was considered to be an enemy of the State. At this the policeman became even more interested and asked her all sorts of questions about conditions in prison. At last he grasped her hand and pressed it quite openly on the main road, and said how sorry he was and that he wished her good luck.

"He must be one of the old guard, one of Severing's police force," I commented dryly. "They are still employed here and there for regulating the street traffic. Pity that the concentration camps are under different management."

"Prisons too," added Kate.

"But isn't it strange," Mother reflected, "that nowadays the general public and even policemen are not at all inclined to assume that anyone who has been in prison is likely to be a criminal? Previously they were generally regarded as suspicious characters, and many who first got into prison almost by accident became real criminals after their release, when they encountered all this prejudice and got discouraged in their efforts to make a new start. To-day it is just the opposite. People of almost all classes have a certain respect

for those who have been in prison or concentration camp. It is never taken for granted nowadays that such people are criminals. They are more likely to be considered heroes. This readiness to respect the enemies of the State is surely a reflection on the moral level of the Nazi régime."

Kate told us about the guards in the prison she had been in. The older ones who were serving before 1933 did not fail to notice how the prison population had changed. They sometimes admitted to the prisoners that things seemed to be all upside down: that nowadays the decent people seemed to be locked up by the criminals. This reminded me of a certain solicitor who used to help us infringe Nazi laws. He would say that when gangsters are in control of law and order it is the duty of the lawyer to help decent people to break the law.

Illegality is to-day the only course open to those who decline to become accomplices in the crime of Nazism. And, besides, illegality of some kind or other is also the inevitable recourse of all business men who want to carry on despite the labyrinth of regulations, restrictions, decrees and prohibitions through which they are supposed to find their way. The view that you are under anything like a moral obligation to keep to law is thoroughly out of date.

Mother was tremendously impressed by the reception which Kate was given on her return from prison. Fellow prisoners who had been released before her either came to give her a welcome or at least sent greetings and flowers or chocolates. All day long the house was full of visitors and, when they left, it was simply a mass of flowers. Tears were running down Mother's face as she told me about it. It made her feel once again the power of solidarity.

And Kate was busy for a whole day carrying out commissions for her fellow prisoners who still remained inside.

The evening I came home Kate and I remained downstairs after Mother had gone to bed. Through the open garden door we watched the trees silhouetted in black against the dark blue sky, and from time to time we heard the cry of an animal, the scuffle of a bird, the distant hoot of a motor car, or one of

the boys turning over in his bed upstairs. We were both extremely curious about each other. We had not met for several years, and previously we had often been at loggerheads over our very different political views. These differences did not seem to matter so much now we were both engaged in the illegal fight against Hitler. Nevertheless, I was intensely curious to find out what were Kate's political opinions after her spell in prison.

I asked her how active Communists felt about the pact of friendship which had just been signed by Stalin and Hitler.

Kate replied without hesitation:

"I haven't met many Communists since I was discharged. I have to be careful now. The Gestapo may be keeping an eye on me. But if you want to know my own views on the matter—I have become very sceptical of the Soviet Union at the time of the Moscow trials. Though at the time I told myself I was not in a position, being in prison, to judge objectively. Do you know, at the beginning I took the whole affair for a propaganda stunt of Dr. Goebbels' invention?

"Yet I was surprised, in prison as well as out, how little importance some of our comrades paid to the trials. They have almost forgotten them by now. I saw a worker yesterday who has been in the Labour Movement for at least thirty years, and who has been a member of the C.P. ever since its foundation. When he did grasp what I was talking about, he said in a very positive sort of way: 'If Stalin says the accused were traitors, in the pay of the Gestapo, there can be no doubt that they were, and if he says they had to be exterminated, he must be right. They have been exterminated, and it is clear as daylight that the Party is the stronger for it. So what is the good of discussing the matter?' I confess I was rather amazed at his naïve way of looking at things, and I asked him whether he wasn't confusing the Communist Party with the Roman Catholic Church, but he didn't understand what I meant."

"Wasn't there a time when you used to look at the Party in that way yourself, Kate?" I could not help interjecting.

"Certainly," she replied readily, "I think it is quite pardonable at a certain age. I have passed that age, and I have had

plenty of time for reflection during these last three years. I missed that before. In the active work you tend not to think a lot about fundamental matters. You are busy all the time, and your mind is occupied with a thousand details, every one of which is important, especially in these hectic times of illegality. You would never manage at all if you began to doubt the infallibility of the General Line and the whole basis of the Party. So you get used to restricting your criticism, and even your thoughts, to matters directly bearing on practical work you are doing."

"Yes," I added, "even if you are not altogether satisfied with the way things are going, you can't allow yourself the time thoroughly to think the matter over, for you are so busy that you dare not let your doubts distract you."

"Do you remember Sam?" Kate said suddenly.

"Sam Of course," I exclaimed. "What has become of him?"

"He has apparently become one of the leading men in the underground work of the Party. I was reminded of him because he told me exactly what you were saying just now.

"I happened to meet him the other day. Didn't you say you wanted to know what an active C.P.-er thought of the Hitler-Stalin Pact? Sam was enthusiastic about it. He said it would provide the best possible avenue for approaching Nazis with Communist propaganda. The rank and file of the Nazi Movement would become muddled, not knowing whether they were now to be friends or enemies of the Communists, and that was our chance.

" 'But don't you see,' I asked him, 'Our own comrades will be just as muddled with regard to the Nazis? Won't the Nazis think this is their chance for approaching the anti-Fascist workers? And what about the international working class? We first proclaimed Fascism as Enemy Number One, and then we shake hands with Hitler?'

"Sam was very much perturbed," Kate went on, "not of my arguments, but at the fact that I had such ideas in my head. 'People are inclined to get the nightmare when they are in prison,' he said in a very tolerant manner. 'You will

get over that right enough, when you have been out here for a bit. Don't you see that it is idle meditating about these matters? We have got to take them as they are and make the best of them, otherwise we might all well abandon the work straight away. And, of course, we must not do that under any circumstances.'

" 'But, Sam, do you really believe that the Party is all right just as it is?' I asked him.

" 'Certainly,' he replied, 'otherwise I should not be able to carry on the work as calmly as I do, and our whole group would have been extinct long since.' "

Kate got quite hot talking about Sam. They had been friends when Kate first joined the Party, and I could well remember how eagerly they had participated together in heresy-hunting campaigns against deviations from the sacred Party Line, either to the right or to the left.

"At that time," Kate continued, "we made a kind of agreement, that if ever one of us felt we ought to leave the Party, whatever the reason, we should not do it without talking it over. I thought of that promise when I met Sam the other day. But I somehow could not bring myself to remind him of it. I felt ashamed for him. When we were working together in the Youth Movement we were like missionaries of a new world. Now he seems to have become a priest in an established church, while I am a mere heretic.

"And yet I have a great respect for Sam. He isn't lazy and he isn't a coward. He is devoting himself wholeheartedly to the revolution—as he understands it. He does not think about fundamentals; he'd regard that as a waste of time; he'd be thinking that he might have been doing something useful. He starts out from the axiom that the interests of the revolution are necessarily identical with the General Line of the Comintern, and if he were asked in the interest of the revolution to kill his best friend, he wouldn't hesitate to do so. If things do not work out as they should, he is always content to blame the class enemy, or the Trotskyite saboteurs, just as the Nazis put it on to the Jews. It is by people like him, whose religious faith in the Party can be shaken neither by

argument, nor by the most complete somersaults in the Party Line, that the whole machine of the Third International is kept going."

"Do you believe that you yourself would have remained like Sam, a blind devotee of the Party, if, in prison, you had not been given so much time for thought?" I enquired.

She reflected for a moment.

"Probably not. Because of Ivan. Not because of the way he died. Not only because of that, at any rate. Ivan was a Party comrade as well, but he was quite a different type. I think he had a good deal of influence over me. I became aware of that only during the last few years.

"You have been away most of the time, so I suppose you did not know him so well. Ivan was another of the kind who live only for the sake of the Party. But he had a much wider conception of the work than Sam has. He formed his own opinions about the work of the Party and the international situation and the revolutionary outlook, and he did not always agree with the Party Line. But there was something else too. He had a very strong sense of the difference between right and wrong; he regarded the revolution as a struggle for Justice and Freedom, and he disliked what he called 'tricky politics,' of which there was so much in the Party. Perhaps Mother influenced him in this direction. Nevertheless, he stuck to the Party, because he did not know how otherwise to work for his aims. But he always reserved his own judgment, and there was no authority on earth to which he was prepared to submit blindly. I used to be shocked at that years ago. And yet it made a great impression on me. He was not only a Party comrade; he was a personality, and I respected him as such, independent of the Party. Except for Mother, there was nobody I respected in that way. Very often when I have had an obscure feeling that I did not really agree with what I was doing in the name of the Party, I have remembered Ivan, and thought I ought to become more like him. Since they killed him I have felt much more strongly that I have to live that way."

And after a short pause she added emphatically:

"No, Ivan was no counter-revolutionary. I don't think he became a Trotskyist either. I believe that he was disgusted at the wholesale murder of Party comrades after the Kirov affair. He probably told them what he thought of it. And that is why they killed him."

"And you? What will you do if you leave the Party?"

"If only I knew," she said with a deep sigh. "I have had so much time for reflection in prison. I wish I had thought more seriously about this question. For all my doubts about the Party, I desperately clung to the hope that things weren't really as bad as they appeared to me, that I was suffering from 'prison nightmares,' as Sam called them, and that I should be able to work for the Party again after all.

"Now I am at least clear that I cannot do that. Some of them may think that I am just afraid of being locked up again. To me the thought of going to gaol is not nearly as dreadful as the thought of having nothing to go to gaol for. I cannot just live for the sake of living among these bullies and gangsters. The fight against them must go on, and I want to be in it—but now I don't even know what is to be done.

"Of course, even without a Party some agitation against the Nazis can be carried on. I have already found a job at the factory, and I am sure I shall be able to get an illegal group going there. But for any more constructive work we must have a larger Movement. And therefore, I believe, we must first discover what is wrong with our present Movement. What is the root cause of the disintegration of the Party and of the whole Labour Movement? What accounts for the failure of those who set out, sixty years ago, to liberate the peoples? What is the cause of the failure of the great October Revolution in Russia? I suppose I shall have to work it out with Fernand."

Fernand! Poor Kate still didn't know what had happened to him. I had had it at the back of my mind that I should have to tell her. But I could not find the words nor the courage to begin.

"I have no idea what Fernand thinks of all these matters," Kate continued. "I don't even know, really, how we should

get on together after all this time. It is more than six years since we last saw each other. I was only twenty-three then. He wrote to Mother last year that he hoped I should be able to join him soon after I came out. I can't imagine that he is still an adherent of the Party. Can you?"

It was a direct question, but while I was still struggling with the problem of what to reply, she went on talking, or maybe only thinking aloud.

"He was very young when he joined the Party, and he had a brilliant career. He is a very impressive speaker and a good writer, and so he became extremely popular in no time. They sent him touring the country, and wherever a delegate of the Young Communist League was required it was he whom they selected. They invited him to Russia to speak for 'the revolutionary youth of Germany.' It goes without saying that all this made him rather conceited, and he certainly enjoyed the whole show tremendously. But he was not uncritical. And he was allowed a certain liberty to ventilate his views even if they deviated a little from the Line, because they rather liked him in the Party and thought he was a promising youngster, and besides he has such a charming way of saying disagreeable things.

"I do wish I could see him again," she added with a sigh. "He has often sent messages to Mother since he went abroad. But there has not been anything for some time now."

She must have noticed my uneasiness, for she looked at me with sudden anxiety. She asked me quickly whether perhaps I had been in touch with Fernand while I was abroad.

We were sitting without a light, but the bright moonlight was shining on the wisp of fair hair that strayed across her face. She looked very young; it was the face of a frightened child. I felt like stroking her hair, but, of course, I didn't do so. I no longer tried to find the right words—there could be no right words for what I had to say. I just told her what I knew. I told her that from the beginning of March there had been no news of him. He had been in Prague then, but had been granted a visa for England. When the Nazis occupied Prague we did not know if he had yet left Czechoslovakia.

We could find no trace of him. And then, quite recently, a message reached us from some people who had known him in Prague. It seemed that Fernand had been captured by the Nazis in Prague, and was shot on the way to prison. But, of course, it might not be true.

I did not want to arouse in her hopes in which I myself did not believe. So I said nothing more.

Kate was staring at me with that frightened child expression, and she seemed only gradually to grasp what I had said.

"He too?" she exclaimed incredulously, and when I gave no indication that she had misunderstood me, she turned her head away and stared out towards the garden, where the moon shone coldly through the branches of the apple tree.

She had at once become very remote, sinking ever more deeply into herself, and I felt that if I spoke I should be intruding. She did not cry or sob, she merely breathed a little more deeply. What difference it makes whether you are alone in the world, or whether there is someone who you know belongs to you, however far away he may be. Her conception of her position and task in life had become somewhat shaky, more shaky, probably, than they had ever been before, but she had felt that she was not alone, that there was somebody—even though she did not know where he was—whom she thought of as she thought of herself, and who would be aware of those thoughts. During these last few weeks she had felt even more strongly than before that he was aware of her troubles and struggles; and actually he was not even alive and she had not the slightest notion of it. Perhaps all these years it had been nothing but an illusion that a link still existed between them, an inner relationship which defied prison walls and frontiers. Actually there has been nothing to bridge the gulf since they arrested him six and a half years ago; he might have been dead all the time; only she had not known it, because she was living with an illusion. And now that illusion had died too.

"I shall have to carry on alone then," she said after a while, and again through the firmness and courage and determination

with which she said it, rang the fear of the frightened child.

She said she was going to bed. When I got up next morning she was already out. Mother said that she had gone earlier than usual because she wanted to walk to the factory, and that she had gone without breakfast.

CHAPTER III

THE ROAD-MAKER

RUTH WAS WALKING with me one day through the forest to the tram stop.

"It is such a pity," she said, "that Kate went to the factory straight away. We thought she would want a holiday when she came out of prison and we all saved up so that she could have one. And I was to have gone with her. Now she says she is quite fit, and Mother is much more in need of a holiday, and I am to go with Mother. I would so much rather have gone with Kate."

I was a bit surprised at this. It is true that Ruth admires Kate with all the devotion of a girl of fifteen for her hero. Still, none of us would ever have disliked to go for a holiday with Mother.

"I want to get away from home altogether," Ruth continued. "It's nice at home now you are here, and Kate. But before it was not nice. The boys are so nasty and Mother is always angry when I want to go to the pictures or to a dance; and she can't understand that I don't want to go about dressed in this silly way when all the other girls at school have much nicer frocks." And after a while Ruth added, "I want to get away from Germany altogether."

"Why that?" I asked.

"You see," she replied slowly, "I don't like this Nazi stuff they teach at school and I don't want to join the Hitler Youth. But it is so awful having to be different from all the others all the time. I am dressed differently; I never get a perm, and almost all the others have; and I am against their politics as well. Can't you help me to get away?"

The two boys also did not seem to be as happy at home as we used to be in the old days. Mother liked to help us in our

work, she liked to have the house full of friends, and though she did not always agree with us she could understand our ideas. She was living with us in our time, but now, in the Nazi Reich, she is unable to live with her younger children in theirs. She cannot understand why her children should interest themselves in the cinema or in fashions, why they should bother whether a passing car were a Ford or an Opel; silly things like that. But the children are interested in such things, and mother's lack of understanding has created tensions which have made life in the little house unpleasant at times.

And there are tensions among the children themselves. In her childhood Ruth used to be treated like a little princess by her brothers. Now they did not think that she was particularly pretty or interesting; on the contrary, they found her silly and much too talkative. Ruth felt like a dethroned princess in the presence of her brothers and she was inclined to snap at them or go off in a sulk into the farthest corner of the house. This somewhat thorny relationship did not, however, prevent the boys from being very generous to their little sister; they were earning money and she was not.

Between the two boys there has always been a certain rivalry. The younger one, Gert, who was seventeen at the time, is of very quick intelligence, good-looking and clever, while his elder brother, Tom, is the sturdy, tenacious type, not so brainy, but more reliable. Tom hates to be considered inferior to his brothers, yet he knows that Gert is likely to be more successful in life. Gert was working in a chemical laboratory and studying chemistry at evening classes, and he had good prospects of promotion, while Tom was a mechanic in a construction firm which was working on the motor roads. At the age of six he had made up his mind that he would be an engine-driver. At a place where we were living for a period, this construction firm occupied the neighbouring premises, and six-year-old Tom decided that he would become an apprentice in that firm when he was old enough. And he really did!

In his opposition to the Nazis, Gert is no less stubborn.

But in this respect the three youngsters are very much alike. None of them has joined any Nazi organisation or otherwise made any but the absolutely inevitable concessions to the régime. The boys are always eager to harm the Nazis wherever they have a chance. They make a point of arguing with their workmates so as to shake their faith in the Nazis. And even at a training course of the Labour Front, when Gert was asked what was the purpose of this so-called trade union, he was not afraid to answer: "It is to make us pay contributions."

"Any good people in your shop?" I asked Tom.

"Sure there are," he replied. "There is my foreman, for instance, the man because of whom I always wanted to enter the firm; he is really an extraordinary chap. I say," he suddenly exclaimed, "wouldn't you like to meet him?"

"Why do you think I should?" I asked somewhat sceptically.

"Because," said Tom, "Reinhold has been up and down the country on the motor road construction sites and he has a lot he can tell about it."

Tom told me that Reinhold has been an active trade unionist before 1933. The Nazis imagined that he was so well-known to them as a dangerous person that he would never dare to engage in subversive activity.

"He never seems to do anything but his job," Tom grinned. "But wherever he goes the workers get their backs up against the Nazis. I am sure you will like him."

So Tom made an appointment with Reinhold, and together we went one evening to Reinhold's house. On the way Tom reassured me: "You can trust him implicitly. I have worked with him for the last four years, and Mother has known him in the old days and Ivan used to know him too. So you may be quite sure that you can be open with him. Besides, since you want him to tell you of his experiences he will be doing most of the talking and he knows he can trust you."

While we were settling down in Reinhold's sitting-room—the sitting-room of a well-to-do skilled worker—Reinhold was humming a tune which I gradually recognised to be a sort of potpourri made up of the "Internationale" and the "Horst Wessel Song."

"What progress," Tom teased him. "You seem to have learned another song."

"No," Reinhold replied. "I still know only the 'Internationale.' But I learned its modern ending last week. Herr Ribbentrop introduced it on his visit to Moscow."

"You know"—Tom turned to me—"Reinhold is not good at songs. When business was low during the crisis, he was working at a factory for a time. One day—it must have been in 1933 or '34—wasn't it, Reinhold?—somebody in a brown uniform went round the shop offering song books for sale—Nazi song books, of course."

"The whole show made me sick," Reinhold interrupted. "Most of the chaps fished their 50 pfennigs out of their pockets in order to hide their honest past, as trade unionists or whatever else they may have been, behind a song sheet with a swastika. I had just seen a member of the S.P.D. of twenty-five years' standing give sixpence for that rot. I was feeling pretty mad. Some of my pals noticed it and the whole shop seemed to be staring at me when the Nazi offered me his booklet. So I asked him calmly if the 'Internationale' was in it. He was so surprised that he could only stammer 'N—no, Of c—ourse n—not!' I patted him benevolently on the shoulder and said: 'Then it's no use me buying the booklet, son. The "Internationale" is the only song that I can sing!' The whole shop grinned.

"I have always found that with my open defiance of the Nazis I get a good deal further than those who are all too eager to express their loyalty to Adolf Hitler. I know, of course, that I am almost sure to get into trouble some day. But until that day comes I am making the best of the opportunities I have.

"And I like the Austrians," he went on, "they also don't give in."

I hadn't much difficulty in getting him to speak of his experiences with Austrian navvies, formerly part of the great army of Austrian unemployed, but now conscripted by Hitler for work on the new roads in Germany.

Reinhold had been working with an Austrian detachment

not far from our town. One day the works manager had an argument with an Austrian tractor-driver. The manager was a proper Prussian brute, and the Austrians hated him. On this occasion the Prussian was in a particularly bad temper, and he shouted something to the effect that these lazy Viennese beggars couldn't make a decent job of anything.

"Mind you," Reinhold said, "he did not use mild language like this. He was an old soldier, and he liked to express himself in the language used by Prussian N.C.Os. in the World War.

"I had observed the scene from the beginning, and I could see the Austrian getting furious. He didn't say anything. He stopped his engine, climbed down from his tractor, and slowly and calmly stalked across to stop the other machines. All of a sudden, everything was quiet at our end of the building site. The others came running along: 'What's up?' I was afraid myself that the tractor-driver might be making a fool of himself. 'Hey, old man,' I whispered to him, 'what are you going to do?'

"You should have seen him stand there—a shortish, broadly-built man. He looked like a toad, dogged and fearless. And absolutely calm. When all the navvies were on the spot, he told them what had happened. He gave a completely accurate report, without exaggerating a bit. 'I am not going to stand that,' he said at the end. 'You please yourselves.'

"The manager was asked to withdraw his insults. Naturally, he refused. He was bald-headed and the whole of his scalp was one mass of red fury. But he was helpless. He jumped into his car and drove to town. I expected him to return accompanied by agents of the Gestapo. But he had only been at the Road Building Headquarters, and some of the big bosses with Nazi badges came along. They asked us in a relatively friendly way to resume work. We refused and they were at a loss what to do next. Our tractor-driver explained the situation to them as he had explained it to us before. I was trembling for him; I was sure they would hand him over to the Gestapo. But they did not. They had to get our part of the road complete within a few days' time, and it could not

be done unless we put our backs into it. They knew that and did not want to annoy us. The outcome was that our valiant Prussian manager, his head, if possible, redder than ever, stepped forward and stretched out his hand to the Austrian toad, murmuring something that purported to be an apology. The Austrian's face was like stone. He nodded coolly, and turned away to set the machines going again."

"And there were no further consequences?" I asked in amazement. "No arrests?"

"No. But we never saw the Prussian again. We had a new manager next day."

Reinhold thought that as the shortage of labour increased, there were more and more opportunities of offering resistance to the Nazis. Unfortunately, the German workers had become used to being cowed into submission by fear of the terror. Naturally, that fear was still justified. Sometimes the Gestapo arrested, on the merest suspicion, men who were engaged in work of the utmost national importance. But as a rule they were reluctant now to interfere, because the employers would rather have workers who asserted their rights than no workers at all. Of course, you were taking risks every time you opened your mouth. But, for Heaven's sake, how were we ever to get out of the present mess if we were not prepared to take risks? And as far as taking risks went, the Austrians were definitely better people than most of the Germans. The Germans missed their chances in nine cases out of ten.

Reinhold witnessed another little strike which the Austrians staged about a year before. Preparations were being made for the construction of the Siegfried Line at the time, and everywhere the building of roads, bridges, fortifications and similar works were being pressed forward at record speed, while at the same time the partial demolition and reconstruction of five big cities put a tremendous strain on the labour market. Scores of separate public works boards and local and military authorities were responsible for getting jobs done within a specified time, and did not know how to secure hands. Reinhold was then working on the motor road near Cassel, with a large contingent of workers, many of whom

were Austrians. They were sleeping in sheds, sixty to seventy men in each.

One fine day, soon after four in the morning, some lorries stopped in front of the camp; the doors of Shed One were flung open, and somebody shouted: "Hey, wake up, men. Get your things ready, and don't take your time about it!"

"It rather reminded me of concentration camp," said Reinhold, who had had a spell of that too, "Especially when I peeped out from under my blanket, and noticed that they were wearing uniforms and holding pistols in their hands. Nobody knew who they were, or what sort of mischief they had in mind, but they kept shouting and ordering us about, so everybody began to get ready."

Reinhold himself slipped out of the window to warn the boys in the other sheds. That gave him and some others a chance to save themselves. All the other occupants of the first three sheds, some 150 to 180 men, were driven away in the lorries.

Those who remained were soon engaged in heated discussion or silent meditation about what may have been behind this early-morning expedition. There was plenty of time for argument, since most of the foremen and engineers were missing and work could be started only at a few minor points without them. Some of the men thought the whole show was nothing but a practical joke which some Nazis had played them. But Reinhold did not believe in the Nazis' sense of humour, and he suspected that his pals had been driven off to concentration camp, and that the lorries would soon return to fetch the remainder of the workers.

However, the lorries did not come back. They had vanished, and nobody knew where they had gone. The manager thought that it was the workers who were playing practical jokes, when they asked him what had happened to their comrades. It was the first he had heard of it. He 'phoned to headquarters. Nothing was known there. He 'phoned Berlin. Surprise and amazement everywhere. The Gestapo and some local Nazi leaders appeared on the spot, and began cross-examining the workers, who were still thought to be in some obscure plot.

"I had noted the numbers of the lorries," Reinhold told me with a sly grin. "But I thought it was no business of mine to help them clear up their muddle. I was all the more determined not to give them the numbers when one of the Nazi big shots shouted at us that we were nothing better than idiots not even having had the guts to make a note of the numbers."

The police were notified throughout Germany, and in the course of the afternoon they discovered our lost battalion—somewhere in Thuringia, about a hundred miles from our camp. A bridge was being built there, which was to be completed quickly for some sort of a big Nazi do. They had not sufficient workers there to get the job done, so they had the bright idea of organising kidnapping parties and borrowing the workers elsewhere.

The snag about the bright idea was that it did not work. As soon as they were found out, they were ordered immediately to return the stolen goods. At eight in the evening the lorries arrived back at our camp, discharged their precious cargo, and disappeared as rapidly as they had come.

"Our manager," Reinhold continued, "welcomed the returning men with some remarks about the urgency of the work, and said they should go to sleep immediately so as to be able next day to make up at least some of the lost time. The Germans did not seem to see anything wrong in that. But the men of Shed Three were all Austrians. They stood massed together in a bunch, and one of them asked the manager what he thought about the payment of wages for the lost day. The manager made an evasive reply. The Austrian then said very bluntly that they were expecting full wages for the day, including overtime, because they had been on the run from four in the morning till eight at night. The manager said that the matter would be given due consideration. Even that did not satisfy the Austrians. A voice shouted: 'If you are in a hurry to get the work done, you'd better make up your mind before work is due to start to-morrow morning.'

"That should have been clear enough. But no reply was given by next morning. And the doors of Shed Three

remained closed. They were shut all day and the next day as well. On the third morning the money was sent down, and they all returned to work immediately.

"But there you are," Reinhold concluded with a sigh. "Again it was only the Austrians that resisted. The Germans did not even think of joining them. It is a pity that people have not more courage!"

Reinhold was working near Berlin for a couple of months during the summer. They were building a tremendous network of motor roads round the capital, in anticipation of the golden age, Reinhold explained, when every German will have a car and the petrol to run it. The building sites were very cosmopolitan places indeed. There were Italians, Hungarians, Austrians, Slovaks, Czechs, Poles and Dutch. Reinhold divided them into three main categories: First, there were those who were used to a much lower standard of living than the Germans, and who thought themselves fortunate in having the opportunity of working there. Many Italians, Poles, Hungarians and Slovaks were in this section. Secondly, there were people who were prepared to fight for improvements of their working conditions. These included many Dutch, Czechs and some Italians. Finally, there were those who hated the Nazis and tried to harm them whenever they had a chance. This group was made up largely of Austrians and Czechs.

The Czechs were mainly unemployed under the defunct Republic. Many had been out of work for many years, and at first they were glad to be given an opportunity to work. But the Nazis were to them, naturally, the invaders of their country, and whenever they went home on leave they saw how the Nazis were terrorising and robbing the Czechs, and many of them either failed to return to Germany at all, or they came back even more fanatical opponents of Nazism.

In their work they were not very efficient.

"It sometimes almost drives me mad," Reinhold exclaimed, "to watch these chaps at work. They dig at a speed that sends you to sleep watching them. And the funny thing is—when you talk to them at mealtimes they understand German

quite well; but when you tell them to hurry up with the work, they shrug their shoulders and look blank, and don't understand a word you are saying. I have been foreman of a gang of Czechs, so I know what I am talking about."

Reinhold looked genuinely worried. I watched him for a moment; then I laughed.

"Why are you so cross with them, I should like to know? Aren't these chaps doing the most sensible thing they can by working as little as they possibly can for the Nazis?"

Reinhold shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course, that is right in a way," he replied. "But it does drive me mad to see a man do his job inefficiently."

"I see," I replied ironically. "First you work for the Nazis as efficiently as you can, and then you do your best to organise an efficient counter-attack against them."

"Yes," Reinhold answered, very seriously. "I have often tried to slow down, to use ca' canny methods. But I simply can't do it. Not for long at any rate. Of course, it is not for the sake of the Nazis that I do decent work. It is for my own sake. It makes me feel so dishonest to make a bad job of something which I might have done properly."

"You call that dishonest? Do you also call it dishonest then if you have to tell lies so as to conceal anti-Nazi activities?"

"That is something quite different," said Reinhold sourly. "I tell scores of lies to scores of people in order to conceal my illegal work." He was silent for a moment, biting his lips, and then went on:

"It's no good arguing about it. I can throw sand into a machine to ruin it, and I have done it many a time. But when it is my job to repair the machine, then I must make a craftsman's job of it. It is illogical. But I should no longer believe in the efficiency of my illegal work if I did not try to do every job efficiently, including those for which I am paid by the Nazis."

"That is how the Nazis achieve the miracles by which they earn the admiration of the world. They cannot rely on the affection of the German people; but they can rely on their

workmanship, and even Hitler's most relentless enemies will save their souls by working to the best of their abilities."

"But don't you see," Reinhold exclaimed in exasperation, "that it's just part of human nature?

"I know chaps," he went on, "who think it is great fun to cause wreckage. But most of them are the sort of people I would not trust enough to accept them into the active columns. They are all right for some jobs. But they are not steady, if you know what I mean. Our comrades in the columns are capable of acting as wreckers now and again. But they hate it, while they quite enjoy playing other tricks on the Nazis which may be quite as dangerous. To practise ca' canny methods and sabotage all the time would drive us mad. As you say—it would drive the soul out of us."

To emphasise his words, Reinhold was waving a rolled up newspaper in the air. It occurred to me that his hands, workman's hands though they were, looked rather unusually sensitive. It was true, they did look as if they were better at doing than at undoing things.

"It is a pity we are not engaged in constructive work now," I said to him, "because what you say is so very true; only it does not fit into present conditions. If the war begins now, the importance of sabotage at every possible point and at every possible moment will be greater than ever before. It simply can't be your job to repair even the smallest part of the war machine. You have to ruin it as best you can."

Reinhold made no reply. He disliked the turn the conversation had taken, and he tried to return to safer ground. Having little proficiency in the art of diplomacy, he simply changed the subject.

"I say," he exclaimed, "I must not forget to tell you about the Czech Communists in Spandau. They were a crazy lot! They worked just as our people did in 1933. Poor chaps, I thought, they are bound to get into trouble soon, because the Gestapo has gained such a lot of experience in the meantime."

Reinhold had succeeded in arousing my curiosity.

"Why, what's all this?"

"In Spandau, near Berlin, there used to be an organised

group of Communists among the Czechs. They had their headquarters in a pub, and whenever possible they saluted each other with the clenched fist. I don't mean that their heroism ended there. They made quite a lot of propaganda against the Nazis, and incidentally," Reinhold added with good-natured irony, "it did not strain them unduly to do second- or third-rate work.

"The whole detachment of workers was led by a former lieutenant of the Czech Army. He noticed that some illegal activities were going on, and he had nothing better to do than to inform the Gestapo. The workers got wind of his denunciation later on, and the Nazis transferred their worthy friend to the Leuna Works, where no doubt he continued to act in their services.

"I got to know about the matter because one of the Gestapo men had a curious way of fraternising with me, thinking perhaps that a man who is as notorious as I am might become a useful nark for the Gestapo. Anyway, this fellow told me confidentially that they were watching the Czechs in order to be able to round up the whole lot of them in the near future, and that already their secret meeting place was under constant observation.

"Although I had no contact whatever with that group, I found a way of warning them. In the end they were comparatively lucky, because the Gestapo were the first to lose their nerve. It happened one night that, after an argument in a pub, an S.A. man killed a Czech worker with his dagger. There is nothing very extraordinary in that. What is extraordinary, however, is the fact that the S.A. man was found dead the following week, and the police were unable to trace the murderer. So, in despair, they began to arrest the Czech Communists. But their observations had not got to a very mature stage at the time, and they could put their hands on only three or four of the Czechs. These were arrested during working hours and taken in a police car along the road on which we were all occupied. The chaps in the car did not seem to be at all frightened. They drove along the road, saluting us with their clenched fists. Of course, we do not know what happened

to them afterwards. But it seems that through these precipitate arrests the Gestapo lost all trace of the rest of the group."

"Did it continue to function?"

"I don't know; I believe that it has been dissolved. Some of the boys went back to their homes."

"They are allowed to leave their jobs in Germany?"

"Theoretically, no. But it seems not to be terribly difficult for them, in practice, to stay away under some pretext or other. In this respect the foreigners are often envied by the Germans. We, of course, are not allowed to change our jobs without special permission, and as a rule we do not get it when we want it."

"Are any Jews employed on the motor roads?" I enquired.

"No, not on the motor roads. They do use them on ordinary roads and railway tracks. But in Berlin at any rate their main job is excavation and the demolition of houses."

Reinhold was foreman of a group of Jews for a single week. After that he was disqualified for treating them too kindly. With a laugh, he confessed that this was the first actual offence in which he was found out by the Gestapo. In everything to do with his illegal work he has been amazingly successful in evading the watchful eye of the Nazi terrorists.

"You can force yourself to say '*Heil, Hitler*' occasionally, to join Nazi organisations, even to hang out a swastika flag, so that the Gestapo should not suspect you of anti-Fascist activities. But you cannot get yourself to behave like a ruffian towards the Jews!"

Of Reinhold's illegal activities I was to learn more at a later date, after I had left Germany. In Switzerland I met a friend of his who had been forced to emigrate. He told me a great deal about Reinhold and his work. One of the most impressive of these stories was the one about the inauguration of one of the first sections of the motor road. The inauguration took place in the presence of Hitler; Reinhold was there, too, and it was due to this latter circumstance that the occasion was turned into a major success for the underground opposition, a success which became known all over Germany

in no time, although it was never mentioned in the Nazi Press or on the wireless.

What actually happened was this. During the night before the ceremony, Reinhold and his pals painted anti-Hitler slogans on the sides of the road, and they used a sort of paint which it was impossible to wash off. They also spread leaflets on the road, and they destroyed over a dozen microphones and loudspeakers which were to be used to amplify Hitler's speech on the following day. While all this was being done, the S.S. were patrolling the road in five-minute intervals. In spite of this, nobody was caught—none of the illegals at any rate. A hundred S.S. men were arrested for conspicuous inefficiency in carrying out their duty of protecting the "Führer." One of them was subsequently shot.

That happened at the beginning of Reinhold's career as an underground fighter against Nazism. Since then the scope of his activities has greatly extended. He has organised a number of "columns of action," each of them with a definite purpose. The first column consists of himself and the two friends of his who helped him make the preparations for the opening of the motor road. They reserve for themselves the most daring exploits. Then there was a group of workers who were active in the factory from which Reinhold was dismissed in 1934. Their job was to circularise illegal leaflets, and generally to cause disaffection against the Nazis. They have a political discussion every week, the results of which they use, in a carefully veiled form, in conversations with their workmates. Then there is another group of people who work in all sorts of different occupations. Each of them is in touch with other groups or individuals, to whom they pass on illegal leaflets and information. They also collect information on conditions in Germany for the purpose of passing them on to anti-Fascists abroad. The most dangerous part of the work is, naturally, the "visible propaganda," e.g. the distribution of leaflets, or the sticking of bills or painting of inscriptions, which has to be done to make it clear to the general public that the opposition is still at work. They seem to be connected with some sort of centre abroad to which they pass on their

information about events in Hitler Germany, and whence they receive their printed literature. I do not know what this centre is, but I suppose it is an international trade union organisation; because they are unlikely to belong to any political party. They are not united by any political conception as far as I could see, and they did not seem to worry much about the shape of things to come. They were united by their common determination to oppose the Nazi régime, working in secret to undermine the Fascist power and to rouse the people to rebellion.

Reinhold was uncompromising in his fight against the enemy and in his demands on his comrades, and he was bitingly sharp in his criticism when he thought they were doing their jobs half-heartedly. Some thought that Reinhold went a bit too far in this respect, and they were offended by his biting sarcasm. But they seemed, nevertheless, to admit that "in times like these you had to be hard," and that there were circumstances when it was wrong to be too considerate.

"Some people who have the best possible opportunities for supporting our work never advance beyond the if and when stage," Reinhold observed scornfully. "Take G., for instance. He works in one of the largest electricity works in the Ruhr district. He thinks he could blow up the whole show, and that he could even do it in a way that it would not cost many lives. Suppose we could do that sort of thing at different places at the same time, and at a moment when the Nazis are especially in need of the united support of the nation—might it not be worth while? That is what G. asked, and he was tremendously keen on keeping in touch with us and getting on with it. But he was incapable of finding an address where I could send him a letter, and since I could not meet him at his home, or anywhere else where I could be sure of finding him, and since he could not come to our town, it didn't seem easy to keep in touch with him. It is easier to find people in Germany who are able and willing to perform great deeds when the moment comes than to discover those who will do the donkey work, day after day and night after night, that will bring us nearer the decisive moment. That

is our trouble; everybody is waiting for everybody else. They all say that they would be ready if everybody else was, but in the meantime they shrug their shoulders, and empty their glass of beer, grumbling a bit here and there, listening in to foreign stations now and then, and occasionally dreaming of the good old times. But we don't want the good old times again," Reinhold concluded emphatically. "We want a new time, and a very different one. The Nazis have shown us that you can get things done once you abandon this damned sluggishness, and all these ifs and whens. We have also to *do* things instead of debating about them."

CHAPTER IV

THOSE WHO CAPITULATED

I

IN TOWN ONE DAY I stopped in front of the shop of Herr X., the art-dealer. There are three large windows, two of them facing on the main road, while the third is round the corner, in a quiet by-street. The first window displayed pictures of the "Führer." In the centre was a big painting showing Hitler in the uniform of an official of the Nazi Party, in a pose reminiscent of old-time photographs; Hitler's real expression contains little of the vision and determination which most Nazi painters insert into the emptiness of their "Führer's" features. In the painting in front of me his face looked very much as it does on most photographs. Of these there was quite a collection in the window, amongst them the inevitable ones which show the "Führer" stroking the heads of little Bavarian children who are offering him flowers. These pictures, widely distributed all over the country and reproduced on postcards and in illustrated papers, are an important vehicle for the glorification of Adolf Hitler.

The second window exhibited photographic and plaster reproductions of medieval sculptures in German cathedrals, and pictures of old German masters, especially Dürer and Holbein. This is the sort of art which is safe ground for amateurs of all schools, whether modern or old-fashioned, whether Nazi or "Cultural Bolshevists."

In the third window, the one round the corner, there was a display of modern paintings. The place of honour was reserved for Ziegler, probably not so much in appreciation of his artistic creations as in view of the fact that it is this gentleman who decides, in the Reich Chamber of Culture,

what is and what is not to be recognised as "art" in the Third Reich. As an artist, Ziegler is no worse than many other second-class conventional painters; as an art critic he is a stubborn opponent, not only of the Expressionism of the modern school inside and outside the Weimar Republic, but also of French Impressionism. And it is due to his peculiar taste that the scope of what is condemned as "Cultural Bolshevism" in the Third Reich has been considerably widened. The other pictures in this window were not so bad as uninteresting. They reminded me of the pledge given in the introduction to the Catalogue of the Exhibition of German Art in Munich "that nothing problematic or imperfect will ever be shown." No need to say that the works of art displayed before me in this shop were far from being perfect. They were creations of artists under an obligation to avoid what is problematic and to appear to be perfect.

A notice at the door read: "The German salute is '*Heil, Hitler.*' "

"Good morning," I said very distinctly as I opened the door. I found Herr X. showing pictures to a man with a Nazi badge.

"Oh, it's you," he exclaimed, greatly surprised, when he recognised me, and thus escaped the dilemma of replying "*Heil, Hitler,*" so as not to annoy his customer, or "Good morning," so as not to appear impolite to me. I smiled not without sympathy and began to look round the shop, while Herr X. continued to show his pictures to the Nazi.

It so happened that the first thing I saw was a postcard, with the proud title of "The Standard Bearer." It showed Adolf Hitler in the white armour of a robber-knight with a swastika flag in his hand, on the back of a black horse. It looked so funny to me that I could not help exclaiming:

"I say, here is something for my album. I shouldn't like to miss this!"

I took the card up to the counter where X. stood with the Nazi. I thought it was bound to tickle their sense of humour. But it did not. They just glanced at it and nodded awkwardly. It made me conscious of the country in which we

were living. Within the confines of the shop I increased the distance between them and myself as much as I could.

X. knows me as an old and faithful customer, though I have not often been able to afford anything beyond postcards or cheap reproductions. During recent years my visits to his shop have become rather infrequent, and he would hardly have remembered me had not our acquaintance been given a faintly personal tinge in consequence of the fact that I used to be on friendly terms with his brother's family.

X. is a strange sort of a fellow. I have never been able to make him out. A middle-aged, bald-headed little man, with a sullen expression in his pale round face, the colour of which reminds you of a cave-dweller who is never touched by the sun and the winds. There is life only in his narrow water-blue eyes, with their piercingly sharp glance. But they seem to live for things rather than for human beings, for things or for formless visions. I never found him looking at other people except with a fleeting and accidental glance, as you look at objects which stand in your way, but in which you are not interested. Without professing to know him intimately, I thought of him as one who was indifferent to the world around him, hardly noticed it even, as one who lived in a world of his own, mainly made up of pictures, books and probably very quaint ideas, though what they were I could not tell.

X. used to be a keen supporter of modern art. At his shop he used to show the sort of works which to-day are classed as "Cultural Bolshevism," and many a young artist has had his first exhibition at X.'s, who was not afraid of showing even the most extravagant of moderns. It was all the more unpleasant a surprise when, very promptly after the Nazi rise to power, X. transformed himself into a conventional art-dealer, responding in every respect to the Nazi dictate of *Gleichschaltung*. He hung a swastika flag out whenever Goebbels asked for it, he saluted with "*Heil, Hitler*," and he notified the public by means of a label at the entrance, that this was a "German" (as distinct from a Jewish) enterprise. At first some thought that he might be doing all

this in order to be able, under the cover of outward concessions, to continue his work in the old spirit. However, there was little evidence of such intentions. Those of his old protégés who still called on him were dismissed with expressions of regret; under "the completely changed circumstances"—his circumlocution for the Third Reich—he could not possibly continue as before; he referred them to the Reich Chamber of Culture. Artists of the Nazi school were now able to show their works at his shops—not the worst of them as a rule, it is true. It is also true that somewhere in a corner one could still discover a number of Van Goghs, Kathe Kollwitz's, Barlachs, and other semi-undesirables. But they were pretty well hidden, and the other kind of art was displayed so much more prominently, and was so superior in number and size, that there was little room for the suspicion that he was bringing in by the backdoor what the Nazis had forced him to throw out by the front.

This rapid assimilation to "realities" was all the more surprising as it was performed by this man who seemed to live in so remote a world. Was his instinct of self-preservation stronger after all than his love of art? Was he after all a much shrewder business man than his outward appearance led one to assume? The flourishing enterprise which he had built up made one inclined to believe that he must have quite a healthy grasp of facts and figures. It seemed odd though, and made the man appear like a sphinx, the sort you wouldn't readily trust.

With a brisk "*Heil, Hitler*" and a firm military step (which sounded as if he was wearing Army boots, but he was not), the Nazi walked out of the shop, and after having accompanied him to the door, Heil-Hitlering all the time, X. approached the remote corner of the shop where I had retired to look at pictures.

"Rather good, these are," I commented.

"Aren't they?" X. exclaimed with almost a ring of affection in his voice. "Quite a young artist. Unfortunately, T.B. He will not live much longer. At least he has the joy of knowing that his pictures are being shown, and I have

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"Rather good, these are," I commented.

"Aren't they?" X. exclaimed with almost a ring of affection in his voice. "Quite a young artist. Unfortunately, T.B. He will not live much longer. At least he has the joy of knowing that his pictures are being shown, and I have

sold a number of them. But I had a job to obtain the permission of the Chamber of Culture."

"Permission to do what?"

"To make this exhibition."

X. said it as though it was the most natural thing in the world that you had to ask the Government for permission before you could dare to hang up a series of pictures in a shop. The artist himself is a member of the Chamber, naturally, otherwise he would not be allowed to show or sell any pictures at all in Germany. But special permission must be obtained before he can hold an exhibition. X. explained it all to me as I did not appear well-informed; but even while he was speaking he became quite absorbed in contemplation of the pictures before him, and only mechanically finished the sentence which he had just begun.

Some of the pictures were rather reminiscent of what the Nazis call Jewish-liberalistic art.

"He was at first refused admission to the Reich Chamber," said X. "Fortunately, he had an influential friend who sponsored him, and so at last he obtained his membership card."

X. knows nothing of my sympathies or otherwise towards the Nazis. He would have watched his words if he had suspected in me an enemy of the State. As it was, he may have regarded me as one of the more liberal-minded citizens of the Third Reich, who in private do not subscribe to the full Nazi creed, but take no risks. I was the more careful not to say too much, as I no longer believed in his other-worldliness and superior indifference. One learns to become intensely suspicious under a régime where spying and denunciation are rife as never before.

X. asked me if I had seen the Exhibition of Degenerate Art which was touring Germany and had recently been in the town for some weeks. I said no, but I had seen it in Munich years ago, when it was first opened. He thought it must have changed a lot since then. Why? He was surprised at my question. Did I not know that a considerable portion of the works of "degenerate art" had been sold this summer

in Switzerland? I had, in fact, heard about this. But I preferred not to admit it. Whereupon X. toddled off into a kind of dungeon which he calls his office, a dark little place where he has his writing-desk and chests of drawers—in fact, the whole place seems to consist of drawers, the front of which are decorated with art postcards, a Japanese Buddha standing contentedly on the desk. From one of the drawers X. now extracted a volume which he brought me with a smile that was too confidential to make me feel at ease. It was the catalogue of the 125 works of art from Germany which were sold by auction in Lucerne in July, 1939. Without showing my surprise at the fact that he had this catalogue in his possession, and without being quite sure myself whether this did or did not constitute a piece of illegal literature, I opened the book.

"Oh, Van Gogh!" I burst out on seeing the first reproduction, one of his most famous self-portraits. "I dare say the foreigners must have been happy to find this on the market."

"It went to America. Dirt cheap, like all the rest. Those who thought we'd buy battleships with the income from this auction were utterly mistaken. Battleships cost more than that."

X. said it casually, almost as if he were speaking to himself, while he scrutinised the picture with that keenness and vivacity which are so characteristic of him when he takes an interest in anything. Again I was at a loss to know if he were really so absorbed by the contemplation of the picture that he forgot all about the Reich Chamber of Culture and the Gestapo, or if by any chance he were hoping to induce me to forget the existence of these dangerous institutions.

Slowly X. turned the pages of the catalogue. Van Gogh, Gauguin, Derain, Matisse, Modigliani, Chagall, Picasso, and famous German artists such as Corinth, Liebermann, Franz Mark, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Nolde, Kokoschka, George Gross, Barlach and Lehmbruck. The catalogue was like a graveyard. Once they lived amongst us and now they are dead. But no, they are not dead, they are only in exile, like

so many who once had their homes in Germany. And for those who cannot join the ranks of the active opposition inside Germany, it is better to be in exile than under Nazi rule.

As he was passing from tombstone to tombstone in this graveyard of German art, X. occasionally passed a brief remark such as "That's one of his best," or "We had that in the local Municipal Museum." Only once or twice he said deprecatingly: "We shall never miss that." When Barlach's "The Avenger" was before our eyes, it was a long time before X. turned over the page, and, doing so, he said: "I am not surprised that they have given *that* away." And once more I was left wondering what it was he wanted to convey to me, and why he had fetched out this catalogue. After having turned over the last page he closed the book and carried it away in a hurry.

I had the impression that he in turn did not quite know what to make of my taciturnity—or was he irritated by his failure to draw me into a dangerous conversation? He glanced at me sideways and approached slowly.

"Naturally," he said, "many people are sorry because these works have disappeared from our galleries. Maybe you know that the Kronprinzenpalais (the Modern Art Section of the National Gallery in Berlin) has been closed down altogether? Crowds of people now flock to the Exhibition of Degenerate Art for no other reason than that they want to see these pictures once again before they disappear somewhere in the cellars of museums, or abroad."

"In a way, it is a pity that they do," I ventured to remark. "After all, these works are landmarks in the cultural development of the nation."

"That is true," he answered indifferently, without betraying the slightest touch of personal interest in the subject of our conversation. "But in the Third Reich we are not concerned with landmarks of past history, but with arrows that point to the future. To-day the artist and the public are made to feel that the cultural life of the nation has become purified. It is clear that in general it is only for purposes of propaganda

that the relatively high standard of art in the German Republic is not now admitted. Fundamentally, criticism is directed not so much against this in itself as against the attitude of the so-called modern artist to the people. Any sort of artistic activity was taken as a licence for a rather easy-going and immoral way of living. An artist thought himself far above the mass of the people. It did not matter whether the others, with the exception of a few highbrows, could make anything of what was called 'modern art.' He did not even care whether they recognised what was supposed to be represented on a picture. The more horrible-looking and distorted it was, the more it was considered to be 'original' and outstanding. If you did not pretend to feel deeply moved by a piece of canvas with a few blots of colour smeared over it, you were considered a philistine in the realm of art. Any would-be artist who was incapable or too lazy to master the technique of art was allowed to present as the 'expression of his inner urge,' creations which remind you of the scribbling of children between the ages of three and ten. It is true that there was a different sort of art as well. It is also true that not all artists indulged in obscene orgies and communism, and they were not even all of Jewish origin. Maybe the extremes of that 'modern art' were represented only by a small minority. But this minority brought the name of art into discredit in the eyes of the people. To say this about the relationship between contemporary art and society in the Weimar epoch is not even a very horrible accusation. How many of those who now are our most famous masters had nothing but contempt and derision from their contemporaries. In the interest of eternal art it may be better if the artist is not bound to conform to the taste and convention of his time. But if the chief aim is to introduce the people of our time into a new epoch, then indeed one will find it useful to destroy all those who are not favoured by the masses, thus providing concrete evidence of the revolutionary changes which have taken place. To convince the people that 'everything was to be entirely changed'—as Dr. Goebbels once summed up the Nazi programme—a rigid line had to be drawn. You could not go to the masses and tell them that

some of the works which were unintelligible to them were of value nevertheless, while others were just good enough for the rubbish-heap. The same tactical method which helped Fascism to power in the political field had to be resorted to in respect of art. It is the method of not making futile distinctions which, while doing justice to individual cases, are apt to blur before the eyes of the masses the clear vision of the enemy. Just as you were bound to induce the masses to hate *the* Jews, if anti-Semitism was to be made a policy, and not to investigate in each particular case whether you had to deal with a good Jew or a bad Jew, so you had to proceed with art and the artist. There had to be a general spring-cleaning, and you had to make sure that only such new creations of art were placed before the public as were thoroughly intelligible to the man in the street. At the same time this man in the street was shown the Exhibition of Degenerate Art, which was to impress him with the contrast between the straightforward and simple character of German art, and the crazy distortions which were shown him as characteristic of the Jewish-Bolshevist art of the past.

"This new German art is not supposed to give expression to individual or social problems and grievances. It is the mission of the artist to-day to assist the Führer of the Reich by symbolising his struggle and his aims. The subjects on which the artist should dwell are not destitution and despair, but health, happiness and the harmony of the united will of the nation. But it would be wrong to say quite generally that the problems are being shirked in this new art of ours. Some are. Others are only being faced from a totally different angle. Previously caricature was the way of drawing people's attention to an evil. To-day's method is that of idealising; you put before people a condition as it ought to be, and leave it to them to contrast it with the actual state of affairs. Of course the masses will not bother doing this, but stare complacently at the beautiful harmony before them.

"Art, like everything to-day is for the million. There is no place to-day for an élite of any sort, except in political leadership. There is no place for an élite of art-lovers and

artists, out to cultivate their own urges, impulses and ideas. Everything to-day has to be levelled down to the plain standard of the masses. Such is the social ideal of our time."

X. explained all this to me while I was going through piles of art postcards on the big table in the centre of the shop. While speaking he was doing odd jobs here and there, placing things in position in the show-cases, carrying away boxes fetched out for his last customer, and frequently he interrupted himself in order to gaze at a picture with a forlorn smile. But soon he would turn away from it again, and continue to speak, his voice as colourless as the skin of his face. Not the slightest undertone of sarcasm or emotion was to be detected in the greyness of this voice, nothing but sheer indifference. He used not to be like this, I said to myself, though he was always rather odd. But he used to be keen on things, not morbid as he is now.

Since he seemed to have nothing more to say, I threw in casually:

"Propaganda is one of the most totalitarian features of the totalitarian State. Propaganda takes hold of every human impulse and redirects it in accordance with its own ends. In the totalitarian State art can be nothing but a province in the realm of propaganda. Our art exhibitions are to-day not made to form a link between the artist and the public. They are intended as a link between the State and the people. The artist is only a servant of the State. His work is to advertise the progress achieved in the Third Reich. The triumph is not the artist's, but that of the political leadership. Art exhibitions abroad, especially in the Balkans, are arranged with a view to winning the sympathies of other peoples, not so much for German art as for Germany's political ambitions. Not only is it true, therefore, that art is being levelled down to the standard of the masses, it is also true that art must adapt itself to the requirements—the political requirements—of the State."

"The State," he replied, "is always political. Its actions will always be dominated by political motives. It is inevitable, therefore, that in the totalitarian State art must become a

political domain. This was clear to me from the very outset."

He turned away and slowly walked into his dungeon, where he seemed to get busy with sorting things into drawers.

"This was clear to me from the very outset"—these were his final words. Were they the key to his unpleasant behaviour in and since 1933? Had he resigned himself to the fact that the Nazis were firmly established in power, and that this was bound to mean the end of German art? Had he drawn the conclusion that it was no good trying to revive a dead body? That it was just as well to continue as a mere shopkeeper, hoping that thus he would at least be left alone and undisturbed in his own individual world?

Maybe this is the correct interpretation. I do not know. I could not talk to him about it, because of the ever-present shadow of the Gestapo.

I took the six postcards which I had selected in the meantime and asked him to put them into an envelope for me, and how much was there to pay? I should have liked to continue our interesting conversation, I added, but I should have to go now. He looked at me vacantly, and then apparently remembering that we had in fact had a conversation, he invited me to come again if ever I had half an hour to spare.

On the point of parting I asked him how his brother was, and his sister-in-law.

"You don't know?" he added disconcertedly.

"What? Anything wrong?"

Speechless and grey, he stood before me.

"My brother is dead," he said at last.

"Dead?"

"My brother is dead," he repeated. "My brother has committed suicide."

"Dr. X. has committed suicide?" I gasped. "When was this? How did it happen?"

The little man before me shrugged his shoulders, with his eyes fixed somewhere in the distance.

"A year ago," he murmured. "Almost exactly a year ago. They came to arrest him, and he poisoned himself. He should never have done that. But he was unable to make up his

mind one way or the other. He had his duties towards his family and his patients, and he had to draw the obvious conclusions when the new administration began. He tried to be reasonable and did all that was required of him. But in a way he did it grudgingly and in his heart still under protest. Maybe you know—he used to be a Social-Democrat in the old days. And he always was a man of character. I believe in his heart he was still clinging to his old, outlived ideas and the institutions of the past. I warned him not to try to swim against the stream. It is the duty of every citizen to take his place in the great struggle in which the nation is engaged. He assured me that he had given up his opposition. I was never quite sure if that were true, especially after they dismissed him. Now it is obvious that it was not. They would not have come to arrest him if there had been no evidence against him. His own son is said to have denounced him. And this is what such foolish opposition leads to. He is dead and his family ruined."

II

Dr. X. dead—denounced by his son—his family ruined. . . .

I resolved to go and see Lena, to discover what had really happened.

I had not seen Lena since 1933. I had avoided meeting her because Dr. X.'s early *Gleichschaltung* to the Nazis was rather distasteful to me. I should never have expected it of him, because I also had considered him a man of character. They had been friends of mine, but not close enough friends to make me feel inclined to tell them what I thought of their attitude to the Nazis.

Later on, sitting opposite to Lena, I found it difficult to speak to her. I found myself unable to begin a non-committal conversation in a detached manner, but I also hesitated to tell her outright what I had come to see her about.

Lena's face was like a death-mask, hard and impenetrable. Her black dress underlined the whiteness of her face, and there were thick grey streaks in her black hair. I used to know

her as a sparklingly gay young woman, always dressed in very bright colours, and her ringing laughter, mingled with that of her little son Heinz, seemed to be the constant undertone of her house. She was not lamenting or miserable now. There was just this air of stern austerity, making her unapproachable; it created a void around her which saved her from being overwhelmed by the tragedy which was her present life.

Lena herself released me from the embarrassment of the situation.

"My brother-in-law just 'phoned me," she said. "He told me that one of my old friends had been at his shop this morning. He did not know the name and tried to give me a description, but I could not think of anybody whom it would fit. It never occurred to me that it might have been you. It seems you did not know about Karl. . . ."

After that a casual reference to the reasons why I had not been to see her during recent years was enough to break the ice between us—at any rate in so far as it had to be broken before I could hope to hear from her the reason for Dr. X.'s death. For a long time we sat talking in her little studio, with the sun playing on the top of the writing desk, which was empty except for the two large photographs in black frames, one of Karl in a white overall, the other of Heinz in the uniform of the Hitler Youth. Like pointers, the sunbeams rested on these pictures.

I was not the only one, of course, Lena said to me, who had broken with her and her family after their capitulation in 1933. To-day, she added, it was easy for her to admit that this capitulation was the basis of their ruin. In 1933 they found themselves in a muddle of conflicting loyalties. They had made their decision in favour of capitulation to the Nazis for the sake of Karl's work. Not for the sake of his salary—that was not the crucial point, nor did they do it for the sake of his future career.

"Did you ever see Karl's waiting-room during his consultation hours? That may have given you an idea what his work meant to him—and to his patients. The room was full,

usually much too full, of working-class women and their children. There they sat waiting, for hours. What a horribly wearisome occupation! But each time Karl opened the door to call the next patient, his smile seemed to be reflected in every face, children as well as adults, and for a while it would be like sunshine in the waiting-room. I saw it so often, but every time it struck me anew as something very wonderful. And when Karl went through the streets in his district, he was rarely seen without at least half a dozen children hanging on to their 'Uncle Doctor.' Many of them he knew from birth, and he was almost as attached to them as if they had been his own.

"Karl was employed as a district doctor, and when the Municipality became subject to *Gleichschaltung*, all its servants had to sign declarations of loyalty to the Nazis. When I saw the form I said to Karl: 'Impossible to put your name to that rubbish,' and Karl said: 'It is indeed impossible,' and that seemed to settle the matter. But a few days later he told me he had signed the form.

"What made him change his mind? Many of the workers in his district knew that Karl was a Social-Democrat, and they were afraid he might have to go. Again and again his patients came and implored him to stay. And then, only a few hours after Karl had agreed with me that it was impossible to sign that declaration of loyalty, he had a conversation with a certain worker. This man's son suffered from a dangerous disease—I forgot what—and Karl probably saved his life. Anyway, that worker, himself a Socialist, said to Karl: 'You intellectuals and bourgeois, you are always able to emigrate when the political tide turns against you. We, the workers, have to stay and hold out. And nobody cares if our children die because our doctor's political opinions do not agree with those of the Government.'

"Karl was deeply impressed by this. Was it really the courageous, the decent thing for him to do, not to betray his political convictions, to refuse to sign a false declaration, but to cede his position to any Nazi who might happen to want it—to leave hundreds of working men and women and children

in the lurch because of his private political conscience? Was he not a doctor in the first place? Karl knew that many of our friends would condemn us as renegades, if we stayed in these circumstances. But he felt that he would be a different kind of renegade if he went away. He thought of the unhappy faces of sick children.

"And then, of course, there was Heinz. We were responsible for the future of our own child. But—to that I shall come presently.

"The signing of that first declaration was only the beginning. One concession led to another, over and over again. The next was the order that all municipal employees were to hang out the swastika on the numerous occasions when flags were to be shown. Then came innumerable questionnaires and new declarations of loyalty, and public functions where Karl had to appear and give the Hitler salute. His Jewish colleagues were dismissed. We had to prove that we were of Aryan origin. He had to join the Nazi Medical Association, and this meant swearing allegiance to Fascism dozens of times. And since, as an old Social-Democrat, he was suspected of having assumed the Nazi faith only outwardly, for the sake of keeping his job, he had to demonstrate his loyalty to the Nazis much more diligently than many an old Party member.

"We tried to adapt ourselves to the new situation. In a way we were glad that our old friends avoided us. We tried to discover and exaggerate the good points of the new system of government. We tried to find excuses for the Fascist crimes. We strongly disapproved of the senseless foolhardiness of some of our old comrades who were exposing themselves to the most dreadful risks for the sake of fighting against the Hitler régime. For a time we really attempted to become Nazis; because you cannot constantly, consciously, disavow your convictions. It would drive you mad. And yet I doubt if Karl ever lifted his arm in the Hitler salute without realising he was lying.

"Naturally, we contributed liberally to the Winter Help, and we decorated our doorway and our coat lapels with all

its many emblems. And, of course, I had to become a member of the A.R.P. League, and I was made A.R.P. warden in our house. But it was all not enough. Heinz said that most of the boys in his form had joined the Hitler Youth. I did not want my boy to wear the brown shirt—I should rather myself have become a member of the Nazi Women's Organisation. Heinz himself was rather indifferent. But Karl insisted that he should join. If he did not, Karl thought, it might be taken as evidence that Heinz's family was indifferent to the new State; Heinz might be made to suffer on this account, and for matriculation and admission to a university he would be dependent on the goodwill of the Nazis. Therefore, Karl thought, it was safer for Heinz to join at once, and voluntarily.

"You see, after that first concession which we made in the spring of 1933, we were always almost rushing from one capitulation to another, because none of them in itself was serious enough to make it worth while losing what we had purchased at the price of all our previous concessions. It was admittedly a big thing to enrol Heinz into the Nazi Movement. But after all—it was a question of his future. And was there really such a difference between Nazi education at school and Nazi education in the Hitler Youth?

"He became a Hitler Boy in 1935, at the age of thirteen. There were plenty of sports and games and rambling in the Hitler Youth, and in addition to that the new uniform! Heinz was delighted.

"The next year, 1936, he had an accident during one of these rambles, and with a sprained ankle he was for a long time unable to take part in most of the activities of the organisation. He became very depressed and introverted during that period, and never quite recovered his old health and vigour.

"That same year Karl was suddenly suspended, and a short time later dismissed altogether from the District Medical Board. There is no need to repeat the fantastic accusations which were levied against him. The fact was that a young doctor, a member of the S.S., was anxious to obtain Karl's position, and who would dare resist a member of the S.S.?

They are too closely connected with the Gestapo. All our efforts, all our concessions had been in vain. For just over three years they had enabled Karl to stick to his work—but at what a price!

"Still—we had not yet paid the full price.

"Karl received a small pension, on which we were able to live very modestly. He had never had time for a private practice before, and we could not afford to establish one now. Karl began to write a book on *Health and Hygiene for the Workers*. He meant to dedicate it to the children of his district. Being less busy, Karl re-established connection with his old friends again. He was very much embittered, and the structure of excuses and justifications of the Nazi rule, which we had built up in the course of the years, collapsed very rapidly. It is natural that in this frame of mind he got on best with those of his old friends who had remained opponents of Fascism. They did not do anything but talk, but even that brings some relief.

"Perhaps it was due to this embittered state of mind of his that Karl, though he had been the friend of all the kids in the district, was unable to maintain anything like a close relationship with his own son. And yet he had plenty of time to occupy himself more with his family now. There was no opposition between Heinz and his father. But there was always a distance between the two. One of the reasons as far as Heinz was concerned may have been the fact that he knew that Karl was a former Social-Democrat. Heinz was not an excessively enthusiastic supporter of the Nazis. But to him the rule of the Nazis was a fact, and loyalty to them was a matter of course. At school and in the Hitler Youth he had learned to consider the 'Marxists' as traitors and criminals; and Heinz, though not readily believing that his father was a scoundrel, was unable to explain to himself how it was that he could ever have been a 'Marxist.' How could we have explained it to him without denouncing either the Nazi Movement or our own past? Still, it was probably one of our worst mistakes that we never got this matter cleared up between ourselves and the boy.

"For the thing puzzled him, and he must have spoken to others about it—you know how children talk. Perhaps he picked up some remark which he heard at home, and talked about it without being aware of the implications. At any rate it was in consequence of his loose talk that one morning —August 17th, 1938—the Gestapo came to take Karl into custody.

"I was not in when they came; so I do not know exactly how it was that Heinz, who was listening behind the door, suddenly realised that his gossip had been the cause of his father's arrest. Heinz opened the door and confessed to his father what he had done. Karl seems not to have made any reply at all. They say his face turned almost as white as it was after death. He was dead before they had time to take him away to prison. Heinz remembered afterwards having seen his father unlock the cupboard where he kept his drugs, and taking something out and swallowing it. He did it immediately after Heinz's confession. The boy realised only afterwards that it was at that moment that his father took poison.

"Karl was so fond of the boy, especially after the rest of his dreams had fallen into ruin. Like many people who are dissatisfied with their own lives, he heaped all his wrecked hopes on the boy's future. To see himself ruined at the hands of his son was too much for him to bear. Especially since we ourselves had pushed the child into surroundings where such things were likely to happen. We could not rightly blame the boy. We had ourselves to blame. It was too much for Karl. As far as he is concerned—he has put an abrupt end to the chain of misfortunes which began in 1933. To us he left his tombstone which will cast its shadow on the rest of our lives, linking us for ever with that terrible capitulation. And though we ourselves are to blame for what Heinz did to us, by committing suicide Karl ruined his son's life as well. For the boy considers himself his father's murderer, and that is a crime for which there is no reparation."

"And what happened to Heinz?"

"Heinz never returned home after that day. He was afraid to see me mourn for the father he had killed. He stayed

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"And what happened to Heinz?"

"Heinz never returned home after that day. He was afraid to see me mourn for the father he had killed. He stayed

somewhere with a friend. At times I did not even know where he was. It is odd to be left alone after having lived for a family for seventeen years.

"I tried to make Heinz come back. But he refused. He felt wretched and ruined. 'When I am with you I shall never cease to think of what I have done,' he said. He joined the Air Force. 'At any rate they will keep me busy there,' he wrote. He had not been there long when he had an accident. He has been in hospital for nearly three months now. I think he just lacks the will to get well again, he has no interest in his life, he is indifferent to everything and everybody.

"He is extinct inside, just as I am. If we could find the way to each other, maybe we both should be able to live. But I do not think we shall."

III

In the course of our conversation another guest arrived. Lena introduced him as Klaus Breitenbach, a former schoolmate of Heinz's. He sat down at the table without waiting to be invited, and helped himself to a cup of coffee, evidently feeling very much at home, and Lena continued to speak without taking much notice of him. He was a tall, healthy-looking boy, not exceedingly intelligent, perhaps, but good-natured. He was wearing the uniform of the Hitler Youth.

Having said good-bye to Lena, I had not quite reached the bottom of the stairs when I heard the door of her flat in the fourth floor bang, and Klaus clattered down after me, catching me up in the street; he asked if he might walk along with me, and, without waiting for a reply, he added with a touch of sarcasm:

"Since you seemed to be so interested in what Frau Lena just told you, I might inform you that she has not given you a very true account."

I was not altogether favourably impressed by his brusque manner; however, I was interested to hear more about the case.

"You are in a position to judge that?" I asked.

"Certainly. I was Heinz's best friend."

"And Frau Lena is only his mother."

"Exactly. And parents never know much about their children's lives, although they fancy they know everything. But they can't understand our new age."

"You may be right there," I retorted. "And what do you think was not true in the story which Frau Lena told me?"

He was only too eager to answer this question. Perhaps he felt an urge to talk about it to someone. It is difficult to explain otherwise why he went out of his way to give all this information to a stranger like me. Maybe, of course, he did it in order to make himself feel more important.

"It is true," Klaus said very pointedly, "that Heinz denounced his father to the Gestapo. But it is not true that he did it by loose talk, or gossip, as Mrs. X. imagines. He did it on purpose."

"You know that for a fact?"

"Of course I do. I know all about it. Anyone who knew Heinz would know that he would not have given his father away by mere gossip. Why, Heinz never spoke about his people at all; those of us who were not familiar with Dr. X. as a doctor would never have known who Heinz's father was. I do not think that, apart from me, he ever invited any of us to his home."

"But why should he have denounced his father? Did he hate him?" I asked.

"No, he cannot have hated him. On the contrary, I think he admired his father very much. Once he lent me a book, and I lost it. He was terribly furious about that. So I offered to buy him another copy. 'That's no good to me,' he shouted. 'The one you have lost was a present from my father. He gave it to me from his own bookcase.' He would not have cared so much about it if he was not fond of his father."

"H'm. That sounds convincing. But what is your explanation? Why did he denounce his father?"

"Don't repeat to Frau Lena what I am going to tell you," Klaus said in a confidential undertone. "She is nice and I often go to see her because she is lonely, and because Heinz wants to keep in touch with her through me. But I do not care

to discuss these things with her. She belongs too much to the old generation. Few people with grey hair understand those things. But quite apart from Frau Lena—don't talk about this matter at all. It might get me into trouble.

"We joined the Hitler Youth together, Heinz and myself. But then he had that sprained ankle—I think Frau Lena mentioned it to you. He was unable to go on duty in the Hitler Youth. It must have been about that time that Dr. X. lost his job. He was, I believe, rather furious about it. He was a nice man, Dr. X. was, really—but he had been a Marxist, and the Gestapo seem to have suspected him of engaging in subversive activities. So it came about that Heinz was told by our Group Leader that, instead of the usual service, he would be given a special task which was of great national importance. He was to spy and inform on his father. Our Chief added that he would have ways and means of checking whether Heinz did his duty or not. If they found he was shirking it, or spoke to anyone about it, well, then his parents would be arrested straight away.

"Not even to me did he speak about it," Klaus said emphatically. "Until his father's death. Up till then, he kept it all to himself. At first I thought that it was due to that accident of his that he became so silent and depressed. He used to be very fond of games and camping. But he remained depressed when his ankle was right again. When I asked him what he was fretting about, he started a fight, but he never answered the question.

"After his father's death he told me the story. He had been ordered to observe with what sort of people his father mixed, whether his people criticised the Führer at home, and whether Dr. X. was in fact writing a book about the hygiene of the workers, or whatever it was he claimed to write about, or whether all that was only a pretext to cover up some sort of subversive activities. At the beginning Heinz gave reports which he knew could not do any harm to his father. He gave the names of relatives and friends who were good Nazis or non-political beyond suspicion. However, our Chief was not satisfied with that. One day he told Heinz that last week his

father held a discussion at his home with four Marxists. Why had Heinz failed to report it? So Heinz had to put a little bit more into his reports. But he still avoided anything which he thought might be used against his father.

"On the other hand, Heinz was very much at odds with himself as to whether he *ought* not to inform on his father. Naturally, he hated doing it. But he knew as well as we all do that it is our duty to help to combat those who try to undermine the Third Reich; and if it were true that his own father engaged in such activities, why then he had to deal with his father, as he would have dealt with any other enemy of the Nazi State. It was this argument on the one hand, and the repeated rebukes which he had to endure on account of the scantiness of his reports, which made him put more and more into them. Heinz was very doubtful afterwards if he had not even misinterpreted certain harmless remarks which his father made, and taken them down as evidence of illegal activities. After all, it is understandable that Dr. X. was upset about his dismissal, and if he gave vent to his feelings from time to time, that need not have constituted a very great crime. But Heinz got into trouble whenever he had nothing to report. He suffered terribly over the whole matter, he became nervous and irritable, and very bad at school, even at sport and games. It was a shame, really, to watch him get worse and worse. Even his parents and teachers noticed it in the long run, and he was given some medical treatment, and once again freed from active service in the Hitler Youth; nobody knew that it was the other kind of service that was wearing him down. He told me that any number of times he had gone into his father's room with the intention of telling him everything; any number of times when out for a walk with his father he tried to make up his mind to speak, but he never got to the point of doing it.

"One day he reported that the night before Herr X. had given a printed leaflet to his father, and that Herr X. had said in a whisper: 'Read it and keep it in a safe place. I shall be calling for it the day after to-morrow.' The morning after Heinz's report, the Gestapo came to arrest Dr. X. When

Heinz heard them mention the leaflet, he got such a shock that he rushed in and confessed he had informed on his father.

"And now Heinz cannot get over the idea that he is guilty of his father's death."

"I should think it must be difficult to get over a thing like that," I ventured to remark.

"Well, Heinz thinks he has been a scoundrel, and that he should never have done it. And he says that he has covered himself with an inextinguishable guilt, and that he does not want to live, because, his father being dead, he will never be able to repair the damage he has done. I can understand his fretting about it, though it is not his fault that the old man killed himself straight away. He might have proved his innocence and everything would have been O.K. But I don't really know how I should have acted in Heinz's place. After all, we have to be soldiers of Adolf Hitler in the first place, and only in the second place sons of our parents, or whatever else we happen to be in civil life. Didn't we take the oath of allegiance to the Führer on his birthday? This oath binds us to do our duty as Germans. If it is our national duty to safeguard the State and to protect the Führer, it would be cowardly to shirk that duty just because the enemy of the State happens to be our parent. We must be prepared to live and die for the fatherland and the Führer, if Germany is to become great and powerful. These are things which the older generation are unable to grasp. I do not blame them for it. They have grown up in a different world, a different sort of ideology. I do not grudge them their world as long as they keep away from ours. They were responsible for Versailles, while we National Socialists have liberated Germany. This fact alone deprives them of the right to voice moral opinions and objections against the policy of the Führer. We are not interested in the moral arguments of people who in their hearts are still half-living in the Weimar Republic. The ethic of our time proclaims that all is well done that is done for the Führer, and that right is what serves the German people. And looked at in this way Heinz has only done his duty.

"On the other hand," Klaus added in a less rhetorical tone,

"it *is* a beastly thing to have to denounce one's parents. Heinz said that what made him more miserable and wretched than anything during these years was that while he was denouncing his parents they were always being so good to him and showing their affection for him. He really was fond of them. And though I myself am not on very good terms with my parents, I should hate to have to do what he has done.

"It only shows that we are not yet good National Socialists. We are not really worthy of our Führer. . . ."

CHAPTER V

ILLUSIONS AND REALITIES

WHEN MOTHER CAME HOME she said she had met Hanna at the post office. She had told Hanna that Kate had been released from prison. And Hanna said she would come and see us on Sunday.

"Don't know what she wants," Kate grumbled. "Going to inform on us perhaps. . . ."

Mother protested vehemently. Hanna would never do that.

"But she is a Nazi now, isn't she?" Kate asked sharply. "And she knows that we are not, so what is she coming here for?"

Mother sometimes despairs of Kate's logical way of looking at things.

"I didn't ask her why she wanted to come to see us again," Mother said. "I believe she feels a bit lost the way she is living now. Maybe that is why."

I suggested that, anyway, it might be interesting for us to hear about Hanna's experiences with the Nazis, and we left it at that.

When she came on Sunday she was rather more reserved than she used to be. For Hanna was one of those who used to spend most of their free time in our house before Hitler came to power. Since then we have met but rarely. She has a job with the N.S.V. (National Socialist people's welfare organisation). And when she did happen to meet any of us we would inevitably spend the time quarrelling about the Nazis. I confess that we still liked her all the same. And we probably all kept hoping that one day she would give up her unfortunate alliance with the Nazis.

At present she was working as assistant in an advisory

office for unmarried mothers. It is part of the N.S.V. Very readily she told us about her work. Perhaps this was just for the sake of getting a conversation going, for at first that Sunday afternoon threatened to degenerate into a state of uncomfortable boredom for all. Kate made things worse by being icily polite to Hanna.

Hanna, pretending not to notice anything, spoke of the boom in unmarried mothers which had developed in Germany. In most cases they are very young, and there are not a few schoolgirls among them. One of them was pregnant when she was not quite thirteen years old.

"According to the Nazi conception," she informed us with just a shade of sarcasm, "the sanctity of motherhood extends to unmarried mothers as well, and the stain of immorality is entirely removed from this section of the community. When you see girls who are still children themselves on the point of becoming mothers, you must be careful not to express any concern or disapproval, because that might get you into trouble with the authorities."

Hanna's attitude to the Nazis is odd; but it is typical of that of scores of people in Germany. She is too cultivated and refined a person to like them. But she has constructed for herself a mental attitude which enables her to view the whole business as the birth of a new order, and though the birth pangs may be unpleasant to witness, she is firmly convinced —or at any rate she imagines she is firmly convinced—that the ultimate outcome of this revolution, as she calls it, will be a better and more humane order of society. She readily admits that most of the achievements of the Nazis, as embodied in the Third Reich, make a rather ugly showing. But she considers all this to be a rough shell which will fall off as the fruit ripens, and the fruit will be smooth and pure and palatable. We have no evidence that this is so; it is all a pious hope. But to this hope Hanna clings, even against her own reasoning power. You cannot turn her away from the Nazis by any force of argument. Nevertheless, she cannot be called a good Nazi by any means. She is a Nazi only in so far as she believes in the future of the new era, and that does not prevent

her from viewing the present state of affairs with sober eyes. She took up the work in the N.S.V. in order to be able to do some humanitarian work, while keeping aloof from what she calls the political side of Fascism. She was so active in her job she could even avoid joining any other Nazi organisation, on the grounds that she was overstraining herself already with work of national importance. But however hard she might try to avoid political issues, she was not foolish enough to overlook the fact that all the apparently humanitarian activities of the N.S.V. were merely a part of the Nazi machine of propaganda and repression, and were carried out only so far as suits the political book of Hitlerism. And she had to admit that even her advisory bureau for unmarried mothers was not altogether devoid of political importance.

"The attitude of the Nazis on this question," she explained, "is entirely dominated by their efforts to increase the birth-rate. Even racial considerations tend to be pushed into the background. Some of the girls, especially the very young ones, consider themselves as something like martyrs for the fatherland, and they bear the burden of their motherhood with a slightly ridiculous air of dignity.

"It is strange, though, how people's moral outlook changes with that of the ruling powers. The other day a woman came to our office with her fifteen-year-old daughter. I happened to know the woman, and I also happened to remember that about ten years ago she drove her eldest daughter from home because the girl was expecting an illegitimate child. Now it was the turn of her youngest daughter. I expressed my sympathy. I really was sorry for them, because the girl looked such a child. But you should have seen the mother! She leapt to her feet, furious: I had no business to be sorry for her or for her daughter. They were proud, that is what they were, of the divine honour of bearing children for Adolf Hitler. And she even added that she expected I was sorry only because I was jealous of her daughter!"

Hanna laughed—a rather artificial and bitter laugh.

"A friend of mine," she went on, "was nearly dismissed from the N.S.V. Why? Because she was reported to have made

a remark from which a girl concluded that she deserved a good thrashing from her parents for being pregnant at the rather tender age of sixteen. The N.S.V. bosses were horror-struck when they heard of the incident. 'It is unbearable,' they shouted, "that such remarks should be made in the Hitler Reich! It is an insult to German motherhood!' "

"They are quite right too," I threw in ironically. "After all, they do need men to fill the armies, workshops and prisons."

Hanna had cheered up a bit while speaking about her work. But at my last words she became at once a picture of dejection. She said nothing more and bit her lips nervously. It made me feel rather uneasy.

Then Mother came with the coffee and we spoke about the food shortage and Hanna asked Mother whether any of her fruit trees had been frozen last winter. And Mother said she had lost only one of the smaller ones, a cherry tree—incidentally, it was the one which Konrad had planted years ago. When her brother's name was mentioned, Hanna became quite pale; and when Mother asked how Konrad was getting on, for she had not heard of him for ever so long, Hanna replied in a would-be casual manner that Konrad had been arrested.

I hardly know Konrad at all. He was only thirteen when Hitler came to power, and I hadn't seen him since. He was a friend of my little brother's. His mother lives in a village and he has been under Hanna's care for a long time. She adores him, and his arrest must have been a horrible blow to her.

It was some time before we could get her to tell us about it.

It happened about six months back. He was under suspicion of subversive activities against the integrity of the Reich. I had a notion that he might have been connected with an illegal group, although I had no definite information. I asked Hanna rather timidly if she thought it was going to be a serious affair and if he was likely to be tried in court. "Of course it is serious," she cried, somewhat hysterically. "It is murder, sheer murder, driving young boys like him into it.

They can't even judge what it is all about. But those who entice them to do it, people like you, for instance, ought to know better. If you like to commit suicide yourself, very well, that's your own affair and I shall not blame you. But it is irresponsible to drag young children into this sort of ill-conceived heroism of yours."

It was not quite clear to us whether this attack was addressed to us in general or to me in particular. Konrad certainly used to see Mother sometimes, but Hanna must have known that Mother would certainly not have "enticed" anyone to take part in dangerous work. And Kate and I had been away for so long that we couldn't very well be held responsible for Konrad's activities. Why, then, did she choose to blame us for her brother's fate? Why did she take it for granted that I was involved at all in illegal activities? Kate had been imprisoned, and it was well known why. But as far as I was concerned, she could only be assuming that my opposition to the Nazis did not consist only in grumbling and criticising. I did not like the idea of Hanna being so sure about my political work. However attached she might still feel to us—she was a Nazi all the same. And if she imagined that I was in any way responsible for Konrad's arrest, it was not inconceivable that one day she would denounce me in order to save her brother. Kate glanced askance at Hanna, and then looked at Mother and myself with that "told-you-so" expression.

I said to Hanna that we were sorry about Konrad but that it was not our fault if he had to suffer from the Nazi terror.

She shrugged her shoulders. Maybe we did not have anything to do with Konrad. She would not argue about that. But that we were connected with that criminal business of hunting youngsters into concentration camps—of that she felt perfectly sure. Had not Kate just returned from prison? And how many of our former friends were now in prison, concentration camp or exile? We need not make fools of ourselves by playing innocent lambs.

Kate was on the point of making a reply, and it was obvious that it was not going to be a very friendly one. I signed to her

to keep her mouth shut. I did not feel angry with Hanna, or offended; only intensely sorry for her. Apart from her old mother who was living somewhere in the country, Konrad was the only person who mattered to her. It was not only the fact of his arrest that must have been a horrible weight on her, but also the fact that he was arrested on account of anti-Fascist work, while she herself was making such strenuous efforts to coming to terms with Fascism. It must have thrown her right off her balance. Was it so surprising that she was looking about for a scapegoat on whom she could put the blame for her misery?

All of a sudden Kate too seemed to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards Hanna. Looking away from me and straight at Hanna, she said in a friendly but very firm tone that the people who were driving their fellow countrymen into concentration camps were the Nazis themselves and nobody else. None of us knew what Konrad had done or if he had done anything at all. Nor could we judge it or accept responsibility for it. But Hanna was certainly making things a bit too easy for herself by blaming for the terror, not those who administer it, but those who rebel against it.

"I am not blaming you for the terror," Hanna exclaimed. "I blame you for rebelling against it when it is so senseless to do so, so utterly useless. You may or may not believe in the national future of the German people. But you are bound to realise that the present régime is there and is firmly established and that it is nothing short of suicide to dash your heads against walls of granite."

"I don't believe they are made of granite," I objected. "They only look like it. They could easily be shattered if more people were prepared to dash their heads against them —or, better still, their fists. It could not even be called suicide then. It is only suicide as long as most people think, as you do, that because every individual or small group of people is impotent against Adolf Hitler, all we can do is to acquiesce in whatever he demands of us. And it is only one step further to discover that after all there are some good points in Nazism, and that if we cannot do away with it we had better support

it. And then you come along with your notebook and enrol us all in the N.S.V."

Hanna was rather astonished at this challenge. She was not offended; on the contrary, she seemed to take it as a mark of confidence.

"Don't you see," she said, "that there is a difference between deciding what you do yourself and making young people do the same?"

"I do not make young people do anything," I objected. "I do not even encourage them when they are very young. But if *they* feel the disgrace of Fascism and the urge to fight against it, why should I try to prevent them? Konrad, after all, is not so young as all that. Did you like being treated as an immature infant when you were twenty? It is not at all impossible that if I had been given a chance of speaking with Konrad about the matter, I should not have tried to divert him from his course. I believe people are right to take up this struggle, and to take it up at any price. And when some are arrested others should not lament their lack of sense but come and fill the gap. That is what I think about it. And since you are so fond of Konrad, I think it is an awful shame that you take the opposite view."

Mother was obviously pleased with what I said. Kate, on the other hand, looked very reserved and made me feel her disapproval in that way. She certainly thought that I was taking too great a risk in putting my cards on the table before Hanna, especially since in the past I had made a number of vain attempts to shake Hanna out of the artificial structure of illusion which she has created to reconcile herself with the Nazi world.

And yet again and again I allow myself to be drawn into these arguments. She looks so like the kind of person with whom one ought to be able to reach an understanding, this tall, upright woman with fair hair, broad, open face and healthy complexion and blue eyes, the perfect specimen of the so-called Nordic race, and a nice specimen at that.

At what I said she responded hotly:

"Yes, it would look impressive, wouldn't it, if now, after

Konrad's arrest, I made the magnificent gesture of renouncing my former convictions, and filling the gap which my brother left amongst the subversive elements. You would like to see me, wouldn't you?"

I shuddered as this torrent of cynicism spilled over me.

"We should like you to turn away from the Nazis, Hanna. You know that," Mother said very gently. "And Konrad's arrest might have stimulated you to reconsider the issue."

"But don't you understand," she cried with quite a new voice, a desperately imploring, soft and helpless little voice, "don't you understand how happy I should be if I could do that? I should like to pull my weight on Konrad's side. After all—he is such a wonderful boy, so determined and unyielding, and yet, when he is happy or when he is sad, he's just a kid. What a great thing it would be if we could stand together, the two of us, in the way you are all standing together. But there is something else too. You and he and some others I happen to know—you all seem to have a firm conviction which serves as a guide wherever you go. You do know what you are living for. That has always made me admire you so. I was happy when I saw that Konrad too was developing that way. If it were not for your firm convictions, you people could never have faced all the horrors which the Nazis had in store for you. Yet you face them so calmly, and I think that is wonderful.

"Believe me, I wish I had a faith like yours. But I haven't. To me it seems that what you are after is nothing but illusion, nothing but a will-o'-the-wisp. Isn't it preposterous to think that you could overthrow the State of Adolf Hitler, that you could undo what he has built up during these years? He treads you down like worms. Yet you insist on throwing yourselves in front of his feet to be trodden upon, people like yourselves and Konrad, who are worth so much more than all these Nazis put together; you just ask for destruction. 'What is the good of it?' I ask you. What will be the outcome? The world will be the poorer by so many good people. That is all. And yet, I should feel so much happier if I had a faith like yours.

"But I have not. I believe, and I hope, that Germany will

arise in new splendour from the trials of this decade. But I do not presume to imagine that it depends on me whether she will do so or not. There are stronger forces at work, and they will decide the fate of the nation. But I am sure that at the end the good will prevail."

I glanced at her. Was she really so sure of that?

"At any rate, I cannot influence the fate of the nation," Hanna went on defiantly, with something almost like antagonism in her expression. "But what I can do is to influence the fate of an infinitely small section of it, by my actions and by my efforts. I have renounced all the illusions, you see, which are blinding you. I have resigned myself to sober realities. I can make some people a little happier by what I do in the N.S.V., and that I call positive work. As soon as I earn a better salary, I shall get my mother to come and live here with me. That will be a little bit of a return for all the pain and trouble she has endured in the past for our sake. She has lived and laboured, from morning till night, only for the two of us. And what are we doing for her, now that we are grown up? We just leave her alone, although we know that she sees no point in being alive when we no longer need her. And Konrad could not even spare a few days for her, every now and again. He was always busy with his own affairs, with illusions like yours, which were so much more important to him than his mother's happiness. She has hardly seen him for as much as a week all told during the last three years. I think it is disgusting, and I shall never stop calling it a disgrace. You pretend to be striving for the happiness of mankind, yet all you do is to plunge men and women into misery. You spoil and throw away your own lives and you make others unhappy. And you do it with arrogant self-assuredness, because you consider yourselves the apostles of the future happiness of mankind, which, you think, excuses you for all the harm that you are doing now.

"You will not get me chasing illusions with you. I shall hold fast to the realities in the midst of which I live. Konrad is one reality in the concentration camp. I have to send him things, and I may have to pay a lawyer for his defence, and

so on. Then there is Mother. I cannot replace Konrad; she is worrying herself to death for him. But at least I can do something to make her feel, in her old age, that her life's struggle has not been altogether in vain. That is something which I may be able to achieve, the next year or two, not in the dim and distant future, when you expect your efforts to yield results. And the people to whom I attend in the N.S.V.—I can see that what I do means something to them. And by making them happier I help to achieve the happiness of the people. For even this Third Reich which you all despise so much—it is a tangible reality. It is not ideal. But it is a living body, which one can help to strengthen, to invigorate, to develop.

"You see—I am more modest than you are; I am not presumptuous enough to want to change the world. I set my aims within the limits of my powers. That is"—she hesitated, lest she should give herself away by an uncautious expression —"that is less inspiring. But it is more realistic."

She kept looking down so as not to meet our eyes. She was not really addressing any of us. She was arguing with herself. She was obviously not too sure herself of what she had tried to express as her innermost conviction. Her old illusions about the ultimate goal of the Third Reich—how much had they faded in the course of time? But what would she have had left if she had admitted this, if she had thrown them definitely overboard? Only empty, unbearable loneliness, or the terrifying prospect of a hopeless and dangerous struggle which she dreaded the more because she was completely ignorant of it. To escape this dilemma, she was desperately trying to patch up the shaky structure of her illusions with what she called reality. It was to convince herself rather than us that she was crying that it was not her who was chasing illusions, that the illusions were ours and hers the realities.

Suddenly she stopped, looking at her watch.

"Goodness," she cried. "I have to be at a meeting in a quarter of an hour. I am so sorry," she added, looking up and at each of us in turn with an embarrassed smile, as though she had only just realised that she was not alone.

When Hanna had gone, Kate grumbled scornfully: "I like these people who think we are either fools or adventurers for risking our skins in the fight against the Nazis."

"Hanna is saving her skin," Mother replied. "But she is letting the Nazis ruin her right inside."

CHAPTER VI

THE OUTCASTS

WHEN MOTHER LEARNED that I was about to go abroad, she asked me if I could not go to see Ines's parents beforehand, and to take a message to her. Ines is my brother Rudi's girl friend, a refugee in Paris. He had written to Mother recently that Ines was worried about her people, and that he wished one of us would go and see them, and find out in what sort of conditions they were living. I was rather reluctant to accept the commission, and thought of many good arguments against it. After listening to them, Mother scrutinised me critically and at last asked whether it wasn't that I disliked visiting Jews. The question startled me. However, Mother was even more startled when after a moment's reflection, I replied: "Yes, in a way I do dislike it." I tried to explain to Mother that this dislike in no way lessened my sympathy with people who have to suffer so much from the Hitler persecution. On the contrary, I said, it is just because of this sympathy, this helpless sympathy, that I am so reluctant to be together with Jewish people in Germany. There are, of course, many Jews who, in common with many so-called "Aryans," are persecuted, not merely on account of their race, but on account of their convictions. I am not speaking of them, and they do not arouse in me this helpless sympathy. They are made to suffer because they insist on keeping to the mode of thinking which is incompatible with the views of the Gestapo, and this fact rather enhances their dignity than otherwise. The majority of Jews, on the other hand, are made to suffer, no matter what their mode of thinking is, just because they are Jews. And therefore it is only possible to pity them; their fate depends so largely on the attitude and actions of others, and so little on the stand

they take themselves. I do not mean to say that it would be impossible for them to assert themselves to a greater extent, only I don't believe they will do so. And so I feel this pity for them.

It makes the fate of the Jews so much more tragic that the majority of them fail utterly to see present-day events under any wider aspect than that of their own fate. Admittedly, they are not worse in this respect than most people. It is only that it is so much more painfully evident in their case, because they have to bear such a disproportionate share of the misery produced by the present trend of history. People who fight back openly or underground can never be humiliated in this way; people who fight back are rarely so completely occupied and absorbed by their own fate and future.

I once went to a cinema performance at the Jewish *Kulturbund*, the one social centre which in some cities the Jews are still able to maintain by permission of the Gestapo. That evening I realised more clearly than ever before what the Ghetto means.

Admission is absolutely restricted to Jews, by order of the Gestapo. Those who come have to present their membership card or Jewish identity card. Of course, I did not possess either, and I did not find it easy to get in. Some Jewish people had to vouch for me, and I had to sign a declaration that I was of Jewish origin. I did this, and then I had to sign something else as well, I don't remember what, before I was handed a ticket and was allowed to proceed to the cinema. This was not a real cinema, but an old dance hall. It was only dimly lit and that augmented its desolate atmosphere. The performance had not yet begun, and a lot of people were standing in the gangways talking, while others kept standing up and looking about to see whether they could recognise anyone they knew. Many of those present were dressed in black, or at any rate in dark clothes, and they looked like shadows in the dimly lit hall. Wherever one caught scraps of conversation it turned round the old, well-worn subjects:

"So you are going to Shanghai?"

"I had a letter from my son. He's just arrived in Cuba.

Terribly hot there, and no chance of earning a penny. Yes, he's jolly lucky to have got there."

"For three months we have been waiting for the permit to go to the Philippines. Before that, we were waiting for the Palestine permit. All rejected. Everyone is on the point of going away, and we shall be left to die here."

"Our luggage has been sealed this week. There's not much of it. We had to sell some more of our things to pay the emigration tax and the Goering tax, and all the other taxes."

And, most frequently of all, one heard the question, "What is your number?"—the magic number on the waiting list for United States visas!

There was a notice on the wall: "Political conversation strictly prohibited." I doubt if it was necessary. There was no political conversation. People only spoke about life and death.

Most of the audience were well dressed, and quite a few still looked very much as they did in the old days when they used to be seen in the Tauentzienstrasse and the Kurfuerstendamm, whence they have been driven gradually, by the brown onslaught. A year or two ago they could still be seen going into the big "Aryan" cinemas, but one day they were forcibly ejected. Now they are restricted in the back streets; but at least they are still permitted to get some light entertainment, and they will continue to get it until it pleases the Nazis to close down this last vestige of Jewish cultural life. At the end of the performance they will go to the little restaurant opposite, which belongs to a foreigner and where Jews are still admitted; all the other places being closed to them. A year ago they could still be seen in a couple of more fashionable Jewish-owned West-end cafés. But these were smashed in the November campaign of 1938.

Before the films began somebody spoke on behalf of a Zionist collection. He said that the oppression of the Jewish people would be eased at the rate at which they contributed to the Palestine Reconstruction Fund, and there could be no more startling evidence of the undaunted tenacity of the Jewish people than this appeal. Their great achievements in Palestine are continually menaced by the Arabs, they are

being hunted out of Central Europe, at any moment they may be expelled from the Eastern European countries as well. Where then are they going to find asylum? And yet they do not perish, they keep on living, and they still have faith in their future, and this faith is not broken by experiences of the Ghetto, of persecution and civil war. They bend under the blows they receive, they seek out a spot where there is no one to strike them and there they straighten their backs again. They do not fight; but they are capable of suffering, and therefore they survive.

Does not this explain Leo's attitude? Does it not help to understand why he refuses to be a Jew?

Leo is a young half-Jew; he must be sixteen years old now. His father is Jewish and Leo was brought up in the Jewish religion. He and his people have shared the fate and the troubles of the Jews during these years. His father lost his iob, and Leo himself was treated as an outcast by teachers and schoolmates, not being allowed to join in their games. Some of the boys refused to speak to him because he was a Jew, and they sang the song which says that when the Jew's blood spurts from the knife, then things are going well.

Leo was only ten years old when it all began, and he did not know what was happening; but he must have felt that it was something terrible. He became very pale and silent in those early months of 1933, his big blue eyes grew dull and gloomy, and he developed a frown, and often seemed to be quite lost in his thoughts. One day after coming in from school he did not come to dinner, and his mother found him lying on his bed sobbing; when she asked him what the matter was he cried: "Oh, Mum, I do want that Hitler to go away!"

But Hitler remained. And Leo had to accommodate himself to a new mode of living. He went to school, and he did his schoolwork fairly well, but he spoke little to the other children, because he preferred to withdraw on his own initiative rather than allow himself to be rebuffed as an outcast. There were a few other Jewish children at the school, but he did not care

for them. And so he had no friends at all, and in the intervals between lessons he would stand all alone in a corner, while the others were running about and playing together.

At school he could learn a few useful things, such as mathematics and physics. But not enough and not always just what he wanted. For he was going to be an engineer, and no Nazi was going to stop him. The others could play about in uniforms if they liked; he had something better to do. There were wireless sets on which he could experiment, and a toy railway which had been given him, and a little motor for which he saved up all on his own. He should have had a workshop, really, but there was not much room at home, and he had to do all his work either in his bedroom, which was not big enough for a table as well as the bed, or else in the kitchen, which was very small too; but his mother had to cede him a corner of it.

He needed money for his work, to buy tools, materials and books. His father had very little money, and Leo had to earn his own. He gradually learned to do all the plumber's and electrician's jobs in the household, and he repaired wireless sets and gramophones. Relatives and neighbours would call on his services, and when they wanted to reward him with chocolates, or toys or story books, he would say that he would rather have it in money. He was greedy for money, because he needed it so much for his work; but the grown-ups, who were silly and did not take him seriously, were often upset and would say that a little boy should be more modest. He never tried to explain why he could not be more modest. It's no good arguing with adults. Mother, fortunately, was not a fool like most of the others, and he knew a few others who were of a different calibre. Amongst them was Schulze, the mechanic at the garage round the corner. For hours Leo would stand watching him repair motor cars, and quite often Schulze would say, "Come her, lad. Give us a hand," and once or twice Schulze exclaimed that he had never known a boy that size who could do a man's job like Leo. Leo felt very proud at this compliment; but it did not come to him as a surprise. He was quite conscious of his own abilities. And the

miniature railway which he had constructed at home provided ample evidence of them.

If only he had had more time for his work. His father had started a sort of pedlar's trade with soap and other household necessities, going round to the Jewish people in the town offering his merchandise. Very often Leo had to spend all his free time delivering goods. His father's customers were mostly bourgeois Jews, many of them still living in comfortable dwellings, and very often they would ask Leo in and offer him cake or chocolate, and talk to him in the way most adults speak to children, perhaps telling him their troubles. In the evening his aunts and uncles and cousins would frequently come and see his parents, and they would also talk about the persecution of the Jews, and emigration, and their dislike of the Nazis. These were all his father's relatives.

His mother also had relatives. They did not come visiting very often, because, as Aryans, they were not supposed to go to Jewish houses. But in his holidays and sometimes at week-ends Leo would go and see the uncle who was his mother's brother. He had a cottage and a piece of land some way out of the town, and there the world seemed fundamentally different from what it was at home. Leo felt actually happy there, because there was nothing to remind him of the outcasts, and he was not afraid of speaking to anyone; all were alike, and nobody in the neighbourhood knew that he, Leo, was one of the so-called inferior race. He had friends out there, real friends, with whom he could go about and play and talk as other children did, and they and his uncle and his aunt did not talk about emigration, and about the horrors that were going on in concentration camps. They had worries, too, of course, and not a few of these worries were caused by the Nazis. But there was something steady and orderly about the way they lived. Their lives were bound up with the life of the country, while among the Jews everybody was seeking a new place for himself somewhere in the world; their homes and their work and their families were being broken up, and their very lives were in the balance. All that irritated Leo. It was only when he was away from it that he noticed how much it

irritated him, and how much better he felt out here with his uncle and his aunt and his mother when she came out with him.

Leo was about fifteen years old when the Gestapo came and arrested his father. They threw him into a concentration camp. Enough was known about the treatment meted out to the inmates of concentration camps. Would Father be able to survive it? He was not as young as he had been and his health had been poor ever since the World War, in which he fought as a soldier in the Prussian Army. The Nazis said that Father was one of these Jewish rascals who enriched themselves by means of usury, at the expense of the poor and simple-minded German population. Leo did not know what usury was. But he did know that his father had always had to work hard for his living, and had never been rich, and it was obvious to him that the accusations which the Nazis levelled against his father were nothing but mean inventions.

After six or eight weeks father was released, on condition that he left the country within a specified time. Coming in from school one day, Leo found him at home. Father was but a shadow of his former self; his skin was grey and slack, his face full of wrinkles, his hair had turned white, and his suit had become much too large for him, and was hanging down from his shoulders. And there was something else too, a worn-out, helpless look, the look of a beaten dog. Leo had not expected to see him, and when he opened the door and found him like that, he just stood and stared. He knew it was his father, and yet nothing in this human ruin was familiar to him; it was a stranger, it must be a stranger.

Leo did not utter a word, he turned on his heel, and closed the door behind him, and went as if benumbed to his own room. And an hour or so later his mother came and found him lying on his bed, staring at the white ceiling above him. He said that nothing was the matter, no, certainly not; Mother need not worry; and he came and kissed his father, and seemed quite natural again. But something had happened inside him during that hour, though he himself became conscious of it only gradually, and his mother did not notice it until much

later, when his father was already overseas and she was left alone with Leo.

She noticed it only in November—November 1938—after the outbursts of Nazi anti-Semitic hooliganism. At that time all Jewish children were expelled from German schools, Leo among them. It was the term before he was due to obtain his school certificate. He needed the school certificate to gain admission to a technical college. For this reason, it was a terrible blow to Leo when he was expelled, apart from the way it hurt his pride.

Why had this happened to him? Because his father was a Jew. And because his father had brought him up as a member of the Jewish community. Had he not been registered as a Jew at the time of the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws, Leo would have been allowed to remain at school. Some of his half-Jewish schoolmates had been allowed to stay because they were registered as Christians. It was all his father's fault. What right had his father, anyway, to make him a Jew? What right had his father to stigmatise him as a Jew for the whole of his life by the sign of circumcision? Why didn't they leave it to him to decide whether he wanted to become a Jew? He definitely did not want to be a Jew; he did not want to share their fate; he wanted to be an engineer, and he considered himself an Aryan, like his mother. When his father left the country, Leo hoped that now they would be able to live as Aryans. But the November campaign quickly put an end to his illusions. He did not blame it on to the Nazis. In his life at a German school he had gradually become convinced that the segregation of the human races was a natural necessity, and he considered what happened to the Jews to be their inevitable fate. He might be sorry for them, but it could not be helped. But he was not one of them, and he did not want to share their fate. It was this that happened to him when he saw his father come home from the concentration camp, in that dreadful state. Leo was horrified—so much so that he wanted to run away, and with all his youthful vitality he rebelled against the state of helpless misery which his father presented to him, and against the thought of himself

being drawn into the picture; and subsequently he came to consider his father guilty of everything that bound Leo up with the Jews. In time he came to hate his father, and the whole Jewish race, and in his mind this justified to some extent the actions of the Nazis. He began to find evidence which suggested that the Jews might be guilty after all.

Was not the principle of racial segregation introduced by the Jews themselves? Didn't they apply it against his mother long before the Nazis applied it against the Jews? She hadn't ever told him so; he found it out more or less by accident, and what he heard made his blood boil with shame and rage. Yes, his father's family had been indignant when they first knew that he was going to marry a non-Jewish woman. She had to assume the Jewish faith. Nevertheless, some of Leo's father's relatives, even his own mother, had completely broken with him, while others had demonstrated their broad-mindedness by graciously condescending to treat Mother almost like one of themselves. To some extent she had always remained a stranger in the family, and Leo had not objected to that. But, now the tide had turned, he did object if Mother and he were to be made to suffer the same fate as the Jews. Mother was not a Jewess, in spite of that fake conversion to the Jewish religion, and he, Leo, was of Aryan race too. Had he not blue eyes and fair hair and a Nordic complexion?

So he argued himself into his hatred, and his hatred took root in him and grew more and more deeply into him; for life was not worth living if he could not be an engineer, and if a few drops of the wrong sort of blood were going to destroy his career, then all he could do was to allow hatred to replace his hopes. And yet it was so unjust and cruel, this hatred of his. Why did he not think of all the others whose lives were being destroyed by the racial bar? Why didn't he feel his own fate bound up with theirs? How could he put himself on the side of the hangmen, turning his blind hatred against their helpless victims, who were suffering like him or worse than him. Why?

Because the idea of a common goal, of the solidarity of the Jewish race, had been foreign to him throughout these years

of conflict, and he would have been submerged and crushed by misery and depression had he not found his own way out of the chaos, the way of his own personal interest. To this way he kept tenaciously, for he knew that if he lost it he would lose himself and be shattered and aimless. But he could never get away from the Jews; their destiny was always present, always near his way, like an abyss, and he hated the abyss because he feared it so much.

And why should he sacrifice himself for a common cause? What was the common cause, anyway? It only seemed as if there was a common cause because so many had the same problem. Were any of them seriously concerned with the fate of *the* Jews, as a community, as a race, as a religion? Were they not all worried primarily about themselves, about their own emigration, their own positions? Of course, their interests embraced not only themselves as individuals, it embraced their families as well; but that did not make it a common interest. And even if they were linked up with each other by the similarity of their individual fates, he, Leo, was not linked up with them; for his fate was different; it was bound to be different if he was to live. He would have been indifferent to the Jews had the abyss which swallowed them not been so horribly close to him; but as it was he was constantly balancing on the edge of the abyss. Obsessed by fear he struggled to get away from it; and every step away from the abyss brought him nearer the camp of the hangmen; and since there was no other salvation, he tried, in his own mind, to idealise the camp of the hangmen just sufficiently to hide the stains of blood and dirt. And this was his road to life.

Yes, his road to life! Who knows whether he did not secretly realise that this road was only apparently saving him from the abyss, that it was going to lead him to his doom in another abyss which rapidly approached as the first bombs fell on Polish soil.

. . . .

After all, I went to the Lewin's.

I was led into the drawing-room by a lady whose very

appearance and every word and movement revealed her good breeding and educated manners. She immediately apologised for having to receive me in such uninviting surroundings. The room was perfectly tidy and very clean. Yet it was indeed uninviting. It was rather overcrowded with odd bits of furniture, which had obviously been parts of different suites. The heavy oak bookcase, which at one time must have had glass doors, did not match the dark polished mahogany armchairs with their green silk cushions, and the modern light brown chairs contrasted oddly with the large old-fashioned table. The telephone stood on a little steel table with a glass top, while a yellow chest of drawers with a mirror above it were pure Biedermeyer.

"Just a few oddments we saved from our old home," Frau Lewin explained to me. "There was not much left after the November campaign." And, with a deep sigh: "My goodness, who would have predicted that we should ever live in a house like this—but elsewhere Jews are not admitted. And even this flat we have to share with another family! Quite a good family, fortunately. The gentleman used to be on the staff of the Reichsbank."

She spoke in a very distinguished and important manner, and, begging me to take a seat, she sat down opposite me on one of the mahogany chairs, and said how extremely obliging it had been on my part to come and see her; really, she was so glad that I brought greetings from her daughter Ines; you have to be so thankful for any opportunity of getting a personal message through. It all sounded so stiff, so much more ladylike than motherlike, and I thought of my own mother, and how she would have received me, had I come as a stranger with news from any of her children. But then the lady opposite would probably think that Mother after all was just a common woman, while, in spite of the degradation of the Ghetto, she, Frau Dr. Lewin, had remained what she always had been: a lady of social standing. As such she was utterly incapable of expressing any impulsive emotion, frankly and naturally, and it was therefore quite impossible to break the ice of formality. Frau Lewin was as much overloaded with good

manners as her drawing-room was overloaded with bits of furniture, rugs, pictures and I don't know what else. Many of the things were nice taken individually, and they probably emanated from a household in which luxury was paired with a very refined taste. But not much more was left of it than an accumulation of odds and ends, indiscriminately piled up in front of an ugly flowery wallpaper, and nobody had had the enterprise to throw out half of it and to arrange the rest in a way which would make the room slightly more homelike.

So Mrs. Lewin asked me about her daughter in her ladylike voice, and I answered as best I could. She also tried to find out whether or no I was of Jewish extraction, and other particulars about myself, and I did my best to give vague answers to her questions and yet remain very polite. In between she told me of her own troubles, and of her rapidly vanishing hopes of ever getting away from Germany.

A door was banged outside, and the lady said, "Excuse me," and then called: "Hallo, is it you, Karl?" and when an affirmative answer was given by a deep male voice outside, she called again: "Wouldn't you like to come in? We have a visitor." Then she turned to me again, slightly embarrassed, and said that her husband had not been to work that day, having injured his hand; it was not at all serious, he would be able to go back again on Monday. What sort of work was he doing? The lady became much more embarrassed, and I was sorry that I had been inquisitive in my turn. "They have all to do forced labour now," she replied, stressing the word *all*, because that reduced, just a tiny bit, the degradation of it. "They are pulling down buildings."

Dr. Karl Lewin came in, and a young boy of fifteen or sixteen, very obviously his son. Dr. Lewin must have been nearly sixty, tall and erect, looking very dignified and behaving in a very simple and straightforward manner. He looked very much a Jew, the type of Jew Rembrandt painted. By his general appearance, one would have taken him for a scholar or rabbi, though the searching eyes with which he scrutinised me were very much the eyes of a doctor. Dr. Lewin certainly did not seem to be a fighter or rebel; but he impressed me as

one who is seriously trying to understand what is happening, and to learn from it.

Frau Dr. Lewin introduced us, and told her husband that it was really nice of me to have come, after which she gave him a short summary of the results of the enquiry to which she had previously subjected me. The doctor did not say much. And while his wife continued the conversation with me, he stood silently by the bookcase with his bandaged right arm in a sling, and a cigarette in his left hand.

"Of course, we are not at all used to living out here in the East End," the lady said, putting all the contempt that could be expressed in two syllables into the words *East End.* "We used to have a house right on the other side, of course."

"You were forced to leave it after the November campaign?"

"Yes. There was, in any case, not much of the house left afterwards, and they advised us to clear out, in the interest of our own safety. Those scoundrels smashed all they did not steal. All the chinaware and most valuable cut glasses were hurled through windows, mirrors, glass doors, anything that was breakable. The electric iron was thrown through the canvas of a Dürer picture. The dustbin was emptied in the smoking-room. These are only some examples. The contents of the linen-cupboard just disappeared—no trace at all—the thieves, God will punish them—Oh, surely, if I am convinced of anything in this world it is that the day will come when these brutes will be rewarded as they deserve. Some of my husband's instruments we found later in the garden, and just a few scraps of the notes which he has compiled over thirty years."

"Still," the doctor interrupted her, "we have suffered less than many others. In our family nobody was taken to the concentration camp.

"Yes, we have been fortunate in that respect," he added with much emphasis, and, coming a few steps nearer, he looked down at me from his rather considerable height. "I happened to be away in the country when it all began, and the boys were not at home either. They went directly to some Aryan friends who offered them hospitality. Incidentally,

the father of these friends is a member of the Nazi Party. At home the S.A. called for me several times. My wife very skilfully consoled them with the help of a dozen or so hundred-mark notes."

"Think of the money this affair has cost us!" Frau Lewin butted in again, having acknowledged her husband's compliment with a gracious smile. "A couple of these brown gangsters came for my husband. He wasn't there, but I was afraid he might be home at any moment. So when they came for the third time I tried to bribe them with two hundred marks. But they returned again after a while. They said that if I was willing to pay them a thousand marks they would take no further notice of us. Otherwise I should not expect to see my husband alive again. I had not a thousand marks in cash, of course. So I went to all the people I knew in the neighbourhood and asked them if they could lend me some money. They were all Aryans. I could not have gone to any Jewish houses in those days. I told them the purpose for which I needed the money. And they all did their best to help me. Among them was our grocer, our baker, and our laundryman. Gradually I got the money together. A week later they called again and wanted another two hundred marks. They got them too.

"Then we had to have the house repaired, although we were not allowed to live in it again, and we had to pay the Göring-tax, all because some Jewish halfwit in Paris is alleged to have killed a German official."

It was strange to observe how, for a few moments, as she spoke of her own actions in those eventful days, Mrs. Lewin appeared to forget her artificial composure, and seemed for a short while almost natural. Then apparently she noticed it herself, and sighing deeply, she tried to assume a dignified expression again.

"There was one good thing about it though," the doctor said slowly, walking up and down the room with long strides, and only occasionally raising his eyes to look at any of us. "After all, one does feel oneself bound up with a country where one has lived all one's life, and one is inclined to feel

bitter towards this nation which has suddenly begun to treat us as outcasts. Now during and since the horrors of last November we have been able to see that a great many Germans of pure Aryan stock are ashamed of the disgraceful behaviour of the Nazis, and they have done their best to make us feel their sympathy. Do you know that this experience means more to me than much of what I lost last November?"

He strode up and down the room silently, while his wife looked at him with an air of defiant impatience, as though she was thinking: "Now he is at it again!" Presently, excusing herself at length, she rose and went out of the room, and I guessed that she was going to prepare some refreshments.

"They make us work in the building trade now," Dr. Lewin continued, sitting down opposite me and addressing me more directly. "My eldest son and I, we are both in it as ordinary workers—or as forced labour slaves, if you like that better. Still, the work won't do us any harm, though one has to get accustomed to it. It is even quite a valuable experience for us in a way. It helps us to know the German worker. I have discovered that, having lived in this country all my life and having practised as a doctor for thirty years, I did not really know the German worker at all."

He offered me a cigarette, and, fumbling in his pockets for a match somewhat absent-mindedly, he continued to speak in an almost affectionate tone:

"In November we went to some friends in a taxi. When I wanted to pay for the journey, the driver looked me over and said, 'You are Jewish, aren't you?' and when I admitted it, he said, 'I am not going to take any money from Jews,' and drove off. He was not an exception by any means. Our milkman, our grocer, and many other people who knew us found ways and means of expressing their sympathy. I am sure that we had more eggs and butter after the November campaign than most of the Aryans in the district."

Mrs. Lewin, who had come in again and was busy arranging plates and dishes on the sideboard, nodded her head affirmatively.

"It is the same at work," the doctor went on. "According to

regulations, we are not to mix in any way with German workmen; we are just to take their orders and do the filthiest jobs at an inferior rate of pay. In practice, the other workers make us eat with them in their canteen; they help us when we can't manage the heavy work, because we all come from rather different professions; and if there are no Nazis within sight, many of them will shake hands with us when we come and go. You should have seen them rushing along when I had that little accident with my hand." He pointed to his bandaged arm. "But they had to get away quickly again, because a Nazi boss was just coming. . . .

"One day we were all assembled in a little shed where we Jews are supposed to take our meals. All of a sudden somebody shouted, 'Silence for the speaker!' and an Aryan worker whom we had not seen before—he must have come from one of the other building sites—jumped on a chair and said slowly and distinctly, 'Dear Jewish fellow citizens!' and then he jumped down from his chair again and disappeared. You could have heard a pin drop in the shed; we stood and looked silently at one another and there were tears in many eyes."

He stopped at the window and looked out into the street. He was still full of emotion when he thought of that experience. Then he turned to me again:

"So, you see, it is not the German people who are up against us; it is mainly this gang that has assumed power over them. This makes it a little more bearable at any rate to keep on living in this country."

Frau Lewin offered us some fruit and biscuits, and for a while the conversation dwelt on the shortage and inferior quality of food, and we compared conditions in Germany with those abroad. That brought us back to the subject of emigration.

Mrs. Lewin had taken a much more modest part in the conversation since her husband had begun to speak. Although she often seemed to disapprove of his behaviour, she obviously admired him, and clearly submitted to him in all matters of major importance.

Dr. Lewin was rather touched when he heard that his

daughter was saving every franc of her meagre earnings as a domestic servant in Paris, in order to be able to help her parents to get away from Germany.

"Poor little girl," he said tenderly, "she was looking forward so much to the gay life of Paris. After all, she was not able to enjoy her young self very much while she was here."

After a few moments of silent reflection, he slowly walked to the other side of the window, from where he could face us all, and said in a tone that brooked no contradiction, underlining his words with gestures of his left hand:

"If you can pass on a message to my daughter, tell her that she must do everything in her power to help her brothers get away from here. Tell her not to trouble about us. We shall hold out here, and we shall bear up if we can hope that at least our children have a chance in life. I tried to provide for them as best I could; they know that. But it has all been in vain, and it can't be helped. All I can do now is to hope that they will be given an opportunity for themselves and for each other."

The bell was rung outside, and with a jerky movement Dr. Lewin hastened to open the door before his son could reach it. The boy had been sitting there silently, scrutinising me with his keen, melancholy eyes whenever he thought I was not likely to observe it. He did not seem to be taking a great deal of interest in the conversation. His mind was evidently occupied with other things, and at times he seemed lost in his dreams. I frequently glanced at him, and I was oddly stirred by his air of resignation, which contrasted so strangely with his boyish features. He had the serenity of a child, that absolute, uncompromising serenity, but he had not the self-assuredness and faith and hopefulness which constitute the strength of children. Instead, there was this air of resignation, which gave an almost tragic note to his very white little face under his silky black hair. He did not appear to be timid by any means. On the contrary, there was something relentless, fanatical in his expression, which I could not quite make out.

When I was about to say goodbye, I asked Frau Lewin for the way to the underground station. "I'll show you.

I'll take you there," the boy shot out eagerly. It was about the first time he had spoken. His mother did not seem to approve of his unasked-for offer, for she pretended not to have heard it. Turning to me, she said loftily, "I shall send Arnold with you, if you like. He can show you the way," and Arnold very barely concealed his ill-humour at his mother's tactless behaviour.

We had no sooner left the house than Arnold, almost as if for a long time he had been trying hard to restrain himself, burst out:

"Ines has told us about you and your people. And since you have come here just now, I must ask you whether you think it can still be stopped?"

"Whether what can be stopped?"

"The outbreak of war," he exclaimed impatiently. "Do you think it can still be stopped?" He was silent for a moment, and then, turning fully towards me, he said in a voice which was quiet, but full of passion:

"I have been thinking for a long time—I meant to say," he corrected himself, "my brother and I, we have been thinking for a long time, that perhaps all these horrors could be ended if we set out to—do something"—and in a whisper that was burning with desperate enthusiasm: "to kill Hitler. And to kill some of the other leaders as well."

He paused, to see the effect of what he had just said. When I did not reply, he went on, with that moving serenity of a boy of fifteen:

"Think of what he is doing to us. Not only to us, to the Czechs too; think even of what he is doing to the Germans—they are no longer free. And think of what war will mean—I cannot bear the thought of it. I dream about the horror of it. Just as I still dream of that dreadful November. I have read a lot of those books about the war, those books which the Hitler boys read. They seem to enjoy it. I don't know if I am a coward—but they haunt me, these stories about the greatness of war. So we thought, my brother and I, that perhaps the outbreak of war could be averted if Hitler was killed in time. Might it not cause a muddle in the Nazi Party, and would

the others dare to go to war in such a situation? Or do you think it would make things worse?" he asked anxiously.

"Perhaps not," I said. "But if you are so scared of war, are you not afraid of the Gestapo? Do you realise what the Gestapo would do to you if they realised what you are planning? You are very young—so is your brother."

"Don't say that, please," he exclaimed fervently. "Of course I am only a boy, a mere schoolboy. But, don't you see, a boy who has been through all that we have experienced during these years is not merely a boy. We are not children now. We have not had a nursery rhyme childhood. Do you imagine that we are facing life with any expectations, or hopes, or illusions? We should be fools if we were. But we do not want to submit meekly to all the humiliations which the Nazis have in store for us. We want to fight back. And since we cannot fight an open battle against them, we have to resort to conspiracy. We do believe that it is worth the price of our lives—to us that isn't a high price—so that people should be able to breathe freely again. . . . Can't you understand that?"

"Oh yes, certainly!"

"It seems so obvious, doesn't it? What I can't understand is why others have not done it long since."

"I believe that to many other people it seems to be the obvious thing to do. But they hope that someone else will be the one to do it."

"But what are they afraid of?" Arnold asked, perplexed. "Look at the sort of lives the Jews are living in this country. Can they honestly be afraid to lose such lives? Shouldn't they be glad to lose them in such a good cause?"

"You look at it that way. But most people think that if others sacrificed themselves successfully, those who survived would be able to live more happily afterwards. And they prefer to be amongst the survivors. Besides, many people think that it is their duty to preserve their lives for the sake of their families."

"Yes, but if everybody just hopes that others will do the fighting, conditions may never change," Arnold exclaimed

in despair, and I had to remind him not to speak so loudly. He blushed, and continued in a hushed voice:

"They can't be sure of preserving their lives if they do nothing. They may be arrested at any moment, they may be killed in a concentration camp any day. And they don't refuse to go to war; when there is war they are in a constant danger of losing their lives. It can't just be fear of that."

"When they are fighting at the front they are ordered to do it and punished if they refuse to obey orders. When they are arrested and sent to the concentration camp, it is also a matter of force. It does not require their making up their minds to do anything. But if they are to fight against the régime, they have to make up their minds to it, they have quite deliberately to increase the risk of getting into trouble, and that is what they don't like."

"But then they are just cowards!"

"You can call it that."

"Yet there must be people who are not cowards, and who are prepared to face the danger. Could not a few active and determined people do a lot to undermine the Nazi State, if they only set their minds to it? Do you believe that it is impossible to find such people in the whole of Germany?"

"I am convinced that the people are there, people who think as you do, and your brother. But they do not know each other, just as you do not know them, and everybody has to be on his guard against the Gestapo. If it were possible to mobilise them in one common effort, what a powerful force it would be. Most of their individual efforts are wasted. But, I can assure you, some of them do stand together and fight together, even though you may never have noticed them. And many of them have had to go to prison and concentration camp for it. However, that is not what you wanted me for. What made you speak to me?"

After a moment's reflection, Arnold shook his head with an air of despair.

"It is a shame that my brother is at work. He could have made it all plain to you. And you would think him more grown-up; he is nearly eighteen."

"Never mind," I said. "I am taking you very seriously. Don't be afraid I am not. I know one can take grave decisions when one is sixteen, and can achieve quite a lot too if one sets one's mind to it. So what is it you want of me?"

"Your help. Your advice and help. Do you think it is already too late? Do you think it will be any good after the outbreak of war?"

"I am not too sure. I should have to think it over. Anyway, how do you think you could do it?"

After a moment's reflection, Arnold began to unfold their plans to me. Foolish plans they were not, by any means; they had given their problems a good deal of thought, and had carried out careful experiments to find out under what circumstances it would be possible to kill Hitler, Göring, and a few others.

"And how did you mean to kill them?" I enquired.

"We don't quite know that. We have some idea of how to make explosives. It can't be so very difficult, really. The difficulty is to make experiments with them. There are too many things we are not sure about. That is why so much time has been wasted, and now it may be too late."

"You have been thinking about this for a long time?"

"Yes, very long. Over a year."

"That something ought to be done against the Nazi rule —I wholeheartedly agree with you about that. Whether it would be the right thing now to kill Hitler I cannot tell you offhand. Hitler as a dead martyr might be of more use to the Nazis than Hitler as a living Führer. And at the present moment it would certainly be too late to avert the war.

"But even apart from the question of whether it should be done at all, there is the other question of whether *you* should do it. Wouldn't it make things possibly worse even than they are for the Jews if the Nazis were to discover that an attempt had been made on the Führer's life or even planned by Jews. It might be the signal for another November campaign. And you may be arrested before you have had time to do anything."

"Anti-Semitic outrages are organised whenever they suit

the Nazis' game, and if we don't give them an excuse they will invent one."

"I agree. But there is something else. Would you have the strength to endure their ill-treatment without giving away any friends who might have helped you? You know they would torture you. Don't answer this question too hastily. You have not had any experience of physical ill-treatment, I suppose. Many have thought that they would never give way, but they did. You are very young, and you might break down under torture too. I don't say that with any feeling of superiority. I couldn't tell myself if I should be able to resist. But you can be even less sure when you're very young, because then you haven't learned to know your own limitations.

"These limitations, of course, are not something that is fixed once and for all. You can do a lot to test and increase your strength. Naturally, we cannot ask the Nazis to arrest us, just for the sake of the experiment. But there are other ways of proving our persistence and consistency, will-power and courage."

"I think we have had some opportunities to do that," Arnold interrupted me eagerly, yet with an obvious effort at overcoming his shyness. "When they began to be nasty to us at school, these Hitler Youth blighters, we resolved, my brother and I, that we were not going to tolerate it. We defended ourselves. Everybody who tried to insult us on account of our Jewish origin would have to feel our fists. Of course, they were in the majority, and we were bound to be defeated in the end. But they knew that we would accept every challenge, and in a way they did respect us much more than the others who tried to hide themselves in a corner when the Nazis threw dirt at them and never hit back. One day a couple of Hitler boys, each of them double my size, got hold of me when they knew that my brother wasn't about. They did give me a rough handling that day. I'd better not describe it. When I came home, my mother thought that I shouldn't go to school again; at least I should stay in bed for a few days until I had recovered. But I was not going to let them have

that triumph. I went back to school next day, and we even had another fight.

"But I don't want to waste time telling stories, really." Arnold was obviously afraid I might think he wanted to show off.

"I only wanted you to see that we have had some experience of the Nazis. And we don't easily give in to them."

And then, his voice almost choked with desperation, he implored me: "Do help us in this matter. What is the good of being alive, if it is only to let Nazis work off their tempers on us. We have not spoken of our plans to anyone. But I can see that we shall not achieve much without help, and so when I saw you and learned who you were, I thought perhaps I ought to speak to you about it, and you might be able to help us. Can't you, really?"

"I am on the point of going away, to-night or to-morrow. So I'm afraid I can't be of any use to you. I should have liked to see your brother had there been an opportunity. But I may be able to put you in touch with a friend of mine. Don't get any romantic ideas about him into your head, though. He is neither at the head of a gang of terrorists nor even an expert in the clandestine production of explosives. However, he is somebody you can trust. Accept his advice. He will take you quite seriously. I can assure you of that. And don't be discouraged if you should be unable to do anything of the kind you have been planning. For we must be able, not only to die for a great cause, but also to live for it. Try to live in such a way that anybody who knows you will trust you as the sort of people that are required for decisive action. And whatever conditions may be like remember that people who are determined to work for a better future can do it, some way or other. We all have to try to find the way, and often we discover we have been wrong. Try to find a way yourselves. Apart from anything else, it might make your life in the Ghetto more bearable."

"What do you mean by working for a better future?"

"Smashing this tyrannical régime and laying the foundations of a more equitable one to succeed it."

"Ah, that. How are we to do that?"

"Have you never thought about it? Did you only think of destruction?"

"No, not quite. That is to say, we sometimes wished we knew more than that this régime ought to be done away with. But how are we to know what the new order is to be? Others will have to decide that who know more about it."

"Maybe. But I should not be satisfied with that. It means making things too easy."

"Surely we are not taking things very easily!" Arnold was slightly offended.

"Not in general. But if you don't bother about what is to follow the overthrow of the Nazis you risk all your efforts being wasted. Perhaps Hitler I will be followed by Hitler II, whatever his real name may happen to be, or by a Weimar Republic No. 2. You have to know what you are aiming at."

"So far we have mainly looked at the matter this way: anything would be better than Nazi rule, and the worst of chaos would be better than war. But now the war has begun."

The latest edition of the midday papers was just being taken to the newsagent's at the corner, and we stopped to read the headlines. "Our planes dominate the sky of Poland" was printed in bold type right across the front page.

"Have you ever thought why it is that you hate Hitler?" I asked Arnold as we were going on.

"Why—we have reason enough for that, I should think."

"That is why I ask."

"Oh, is that it?" And, after a moment's reflections: "No, it isn't just on account of what he has done to us. If I were an Aryan, I should hate him just the same."

"And why?"

"Because it is beastly to be ordered about all the time by people in uniforms or decorated with a Party badge. After all, they are only human beings, or worse. I think people ought to have some right to do as they please as long as they don't do any harm to others. Why shouldn't people read and speak as they please? Instead, everybody must perish so that the nation may live. If I were of Aryan race, I should only have

the right to march into Poland with a rifle in my hand, butchering innocent people. I hate it, every aspect of it."

After passing through a number of narrow little streets and passages—I should never have found my way without Arnold's guidance!—we suddenly came out in the main road, and there was the underground station in front of us.

"Maybe it will help you a little to find out what you are standing for. If you think about this question: why do you detest Hitler? To what are you really opposed? That may suggest to you some of the features of a better system of government. And think, too, what it is that makes the present rulers of Germany unworthy of your confidence, and what people should be like into whose hands one could safely place the destinies of a nation. And then—try yourself to be as near as possible like these people."

As we shook hands, I said, "Goodbye, comrade." He looked surprised at first, and then his eyes lit up.

CHAPTER VII

THE INTELLIGENTSIA

I MADE THE ACQUAINTANCE of Frau Dr. Schiller a couple of years ago. In parting, a friend who was forced to emigrate advised me to go to see her. In order to provide an excuse, he gave me a message for her, and he impressed on me that acquaintance with this lady might prove useful one day. Her house is the ideal hiding-place, he added. And as I approached her house on my first visit I was convinced that my friend had been right.

I went along a drive through a magnificent old park, leading up to an ancient mansion, almost a château, which I should never have expected to be inhabited by anyone but a caretaker employed to look after the historic place for the benefit of sightseeing tourists. At this romantic abode lived Ludwig Schiller, Professor of the History of Art at the University, and his ancestors have lived here before him, many of them distinguished like himself in the world of arts and letters. The lady of the house is also descended from a family of famous scholars, and it would have seemed inconceivable to her a few years ago that her son might follow any but a university career. At this house, indeed, I found something of an intellectual aristocracy with the dignity and a little of the snobbery of the élite; and the eighteenth-century, ivy-clad château, with its avenue of solemn old poplars leading down to the park, where each oak-tree, each fountain, each statuette and stone bench bore the impress of a bygone age, all this encouraged one to realise that those who lived here were survivors of an old nobility. When I crossed the threshold and was led, through a vast entrance hall, into a rather dark antiquely furnished room, Frau Dr. Schiller's study, I was so conscious of the age-old culture looking down on me, that at first I hardly dared to breathe.

This first encounter with Frau Dr. Schiller was rather brief. She had not quite recovered from an attack of influenza, and I left her soon, in order not to tire her too much. She was an elderly lady, tall and rather stout, with a very fresh complexion; on the whole she appeared to be a lively and refined rather than intellectual person. She told me about her travels; life in the Third Reich, she assured me, was endurable to her only as long as she could spend a considerable portion of the year abroad. Altogether she was not in the least intimidated by the Nazi terror, judging by the frankness with which she expressed her opinions to me. It was the same on my later visits. Because I was a friend of Erich Hofer, she seemed to consider me entirely worthy of her confidence. I, however, was afraid that this confidence would be shaken if she discovered that I had not even a university degree. She kept abreast of the writings of German refugees abroad, which she read during her travels in other countries, and at home she ordered Penguin books by the dozen, and many other English and French publications. She not only placed all these volumes on her bookshelves—which covered almost the whole wall space of the room—but even seemed to read them all.

"I am trying to keep in touch with things of value, old and new. As far as the new ones are concerned, I naturally have to get most of them from abroad. I pass them on to my young friends, in order to help them to widen their outlook a little. Though very often I find the classics most useful for the purpose. Many of the young generation are quite eager to look beyond the limits where Nazi wisdom ends. But they do not know where to turn to satisfy their thirst for learning. And most of the people who are in a position to help them do not enjoy their confidence or are afraid of possible consequences. During the winter I have a sort of reading circle: we go through some of the books which stand in beautiful bindings in the bookcases of my young friends' fathers, but which nobody ever bothers to open nowadays."

Frau Dr. Schiller not only arranges reading circles at her home. At frequent intervals she gives tea parties to which she invites students, artists, professors and others who belong to

her world. "It so happens somehow or other," she said with a hint of a smile in the corners of her mouth, "that there is never a member of the N.S.D.A.P. among my guests, and that we never speak of the Nazis or of politics in general. We prefer to entertain ourselves with subjects in which we are really interested, and we all enjoy these evenings." At these occasions young artists are given a chance to produce and discuss their works and to get in touch with each other. To me it looks very like an organised opposition to the Reich Chamber of Culture.

"Opposition? No!" exclaimed Frau Dr. Schiller. "We are not interested in the Reich Chamber of Culture."

She used to hold this private salon long before 1933, but it was neither as well attended nor as interesting then as it is now. Many of the old Jewish families in the town used to engage in this sort of activity, and they spent a great deal of money in order to help young artists. After the elimination of these families by Nazi anti-Semitism, the cultural life of the city seemed to be extinct. Many an artist or scholar found himself suddenly deprived of the assistance on which he had been able to rely so far. There was nobody left to whom he could turn except the Reich Chamber of Culture, and not everyone liked to address himself to that body or was equally well received by it. Quite apart from the particular ideology of which the Chamber is an instrument, it became painfully obvious how bad a thing it is to concentrate at one single point all the avenues by which a young scholar or artist may venture into life. Rejection at the hands of the one authority is equivalent to the shattering of all his hopes and opportunities.

"We can neither organise an opposition to the Reich Chamber of Culture," said Frau Dr. Schiller with a deep sigh, "nor can we hope to fill the vacuum it has created. Inviting somebody to our house for a few weeks to enable him to work undisturbed, giving a little financial assistance here and there—it hardly counts. But to make our house the meeting place of intelligent and cultured people—that at least is something positive, and something, moreover, which is rare in Germany to-day."

Frau Dr. Schiller rarely as much as mentioned the name of the Nazis when speaking about this social or cultural activity of hers. At most she would say that "nowadays" the level of education and learning was appallingly low, and that for anyone interested in art and literature there was little to turn to at home. But if she did not speak about the Nazis in this connection, it was not out of fear or caution. It was simply that she was not interested in the Nazis in connection with things in the mental sphere—they had no place in it.

The Nazis, to this lady of the cultural aristocracy, were just the plebs, the uncultured, the brutes. To her they were too contemptible to be worth her hatred. She just sneered at them. Granted that this same plebs being in power in Germany, she was forced to take account of them, she could not possibly ignore their existence. But she would not allow them to obtrude into her own sphere. She would rather have invited her servants to her own dinner table, and that is saying a good deal.

Still, since I was interested, she could tell me a little about the zoology of Nazidom, Frau Dr. Schiller remarked with a disdainful grimace. Through her own and her husband's connections, she knew the leading Nazis quite well, directly or indirectly. She shuddered when she remembered a party to which she once had to go, and which was attended by the heads of the Government and other leading Nazis. "Empty faces," she said, "and the manners of the barrack square." She produced an amateur snap which showed Göring—not greatly to his advantage—at a hunting party at Karinshall. She told me how Herr X. became a university professor upon marrying a servant girl at the Reich Chancellery. Hitler did not enquire into his qualifications; he just decided, as a wedding present to the girl, that her husband should be a professor. And if he were not equal to the job—which in this particular case he obviously is not—so much the worse for the students!

Once Frau Dr. Schiller had begun relating stories in this vein, she gradually assumed the air of an old soldier telling anecdotes, and, having quite a keen sense of humour, she was able to keep the game up for a considerable time.

"It happens occasionally," she went on, "that Herr Hitler drops upon somebody who really is capable. For instance, K. was recognised as a first-class pianist as a result of a *rencontre* he had with Hitler on a liner. K. was setting out for a pleasure cruise when unexpectedly Hitler came to inspect the boat. K. was asked to play, and of course he chose one of Hitler's favourites; the 'Führer' assured him enthusiastically that he was the finest pianist in Germany. K. realised full well that this was nothing but a fancy of Hitler's, who finds in music only a means towards his own glorification or food for his sentimentality. And K. is the first to ridicule his own sudden rise to fame. But he really is first-class," said Frau Dr. Schiller with her lofty air of a connoisseur.

This air of a connoisseur—of one who knows infinitely more than the crowd around, the crowd *below*—is the key to her attitude to the Nazis. Many adults put on this air when they are dealing with children who are playing at being grown-up, and learned men assume it when they are with illiterates.

"It is a false rumour," Frau Dr. Schiller once explained to me, "that our Minister of Education was dismissed from the teaching profession, before 1933, on account of mental deficiency. He was dismissed solely because of his inability to make up his mind, to arrive at a decision. When the boys of his form were up to mischief, he used to waste endless time wondering what to do to assert his authority, and the education authorities of the time considered that this tendency of his rendered him unfit for service as a teacher. He then turned to the Nazis to redress the injustice done to him, and when they came to power they made him Reich Minister of Education. But he has not learned how to make up his mind in the meantime. In pre-Nazi times an Education Minister would not have dared to hold up a vital decision for six or eight weeks; it would have aroused a storm of protest and indignation. To-day the Minister holds eminently important decisions for six months or a year, or for ever, and people just sit down and wait for His Excellency's final word. It is a fact that some decisions have been held up ever since 1933. Incidents like the following are everyday occurrences. An

enquiry was made into certain actions of the director of a scientific institute. Pending the decision of the case after the termination of the enquiry, his work had to be provisionally taken over by the director of another institute, the result being quite a considerable muddle. There the situation has rested for the last eight months, and still there is no sign of the Minister's going into the matter. And yet there is not even a question of principle involved in the case.

"Still, I must admit that His Excellency is one of the few among the company who takes some interest in art. He demonstrates this interest of his by paying occasional visits to museums and art galleries, where he selects whatever pleases him most and orders it to be sent to his home. In this way he has acquired a collection of Delft china which is unique in the world.

"Göring does the same, only on a much larger scale. Karinshall must be lavishly decorated with valuable pieces from the national collections. To those who dare to object to this practice, he replies that all his property will revert to the State after his death, so why bother? It is rumoured that some of these treasures do not remain at Karinshall, but are being secretly sold abroad. I do not know if this is true, and if it is, whether the proceeds go into his private purse or into the Treasury. It is of no great consequence, since it is all part of the same racket.

"I must admit, however," Frau Dr. Schiller added, "that Göring is the only one of the bunch who has at least some education—in fact, one can actually have an intelligent conversation with the man."

It is strange that Göring—the most unscrupulous, brutal, hysterical and versatile of the Nazi leaders below the "Führer" —should be relatively popular not only with the masses of the people, but even with the intelligentsia.

"We need not discuss his moral qualities," said the lady with a very superior smile. "The way he helps himself to public property speaks for itself. But at least he is interested in this type of public property. Herr Hitler himself never bothers to go into a museum or art gallery, except, indeed,

the one which he himself had built at Munich, and where he delivers his incredible speeches about art.

"What do these people know about art? What interest do they take in science? Look at the budgets of the universities and museums. There can be no question now of making new acquisitions or in any way developing what was begun before this great era of ours; there is not enough to keep us going on the level we had attained in 1933. Any hostel of the Hitler Youth can get hold of funds more easily than a National Art Collection. There is plenty of money available for rearmament; and not only for that, for all sorts of fancy building schemes too. But there is no money for the upkeep of world-famous art collections. Why? Because the Nazis do not know what purpose such collections serve. Had they been in a state of decay when the Third Reich began, then their restoration might have begun, then their restoration might have been made an item on the schedule of work issued by the propaganda ministry. But they were in an excellent state in 1933, and that rendered the subject uninteresting for the new rulers. Being at a loss to find a practical purpose for which these pictures could be used, they at least hit upon the bright idea of shifting them about occasionally for purposes of advertisement. For instance, when Horthy, the Hungarian President, came to visit the German capital, it was decided that twenty-five of the most valuable paintings of the Virgin were to be sent to Berlin from German galleries all over the country and hung up in Mrs. Horthy's bedroom. One or two of the responsible directors of art galleries objected. They thought the foreigners might draw inferences regarding the value that the Third Reich attributed to art. And after all—Mrs. Horthy is not even a Catholic!

"But it's so typical of the way in which the Nazis look at things. They know of no values beyond their own power and ambition, and to reach their aims they know of two avenues only: brute force and propaganda. Everything else is beyond their scope. They are interested in science in so far as it helps them increase their military power; in art they are interested when they can use it for propaganda and for their own

glorification. Greatness to them is hugeness. Their buildings, like their demonstrations and their Army, must be distinguished primarily by their number and their size, and even the monuments they erect are advertised as the greatest in the world—in dimensions. This is their proud boast with regard to the monument of labour, to be erected on one of the motor roads. It is to be erected by the man who, having Germanised his originally Czech name and having divorced his Jewish wife, has been appointed first sculptor of our Nordic Reich. The Exhibition of German Art at Munich, as well as the Exhibition of Degenerate Art, is in line with the International Motor Exhibition, the Strength-through-Joy Congress and the Olympic Games—nothing but propaganda. I do not say that genuine works of art are not occasionally exhibited at Munich. But that happens more or less by accident, and only in so far as the purposes of propaganda allow. This is in fact the worst aspect of the cultural decay of Germany. Not only is the level of German culture rapidly declining, but the very place that culture occupies in a civilised nation has been usurped by the Ministry of Propaganda. This may also serve as an explanation of the fact that a man of the inefficiency of Herr Rust is still at the head of the Ministry of Education. In matters of national importance, the Nazis see to it that decisions are taken by him or over his head, if necessary, and matters of purely cultural significance are so unimportant that it is not worth bothering about them.

"But, in the universities, there is quite a reaction against this attitude of the Nazis. It is amazing how the number of students who attend my husband's lectures and seminars on the history of art is increasing.

"And the artist—he too is bound to rebel. For art is no longer art when it has to adapt itself to the fancies and the orders of outsiders. Even if those outsiders were cultured beings, it would ruin art. For art is an expression of the artist's own mind, it is the statement of truth as the artist perceives it, and truth cannot be made to measure. It is what it is. And genius cannot be confined within bounds set to it from outside. Either the bounds will be broken, or the

genius will vanish. The artist may be constrained to lie, and his lie may be given artistic expression. But a lie it will be, and it degrades art into a mere craft. Craftsmanship is not inconsistent with artistic expression, but it subjects artistic technique to a definite purpose, it uses it for the sake of decoration; while art is created for its own sake alone. Artistic technique is used in advertising; but it is subject to the purpose of publicity, and it is not art because art knows of no purpose. Art for art's sake—how much this old slogan has been denounced and how much that was false it has been used to excuse! And yet, how can art have a purpose apart from itself? You can have your ideas or ideologies or purposes translated into works of art if you can find the artist whom these ideas inspire to give expression to them by his own impulse. Otherwise you must resign yourself to put up with craftsman's work. Use posters in politics, or the works of art which happen to be useful to your end. But never attempt to exert pressure, moral or physical, on the artist, in order to induce him to betray his art. Force him to abandon his art, if you like. Make him fill shells in munition factories, if you believe that will increase the value of his services to society. You will be doing less harm to art like this than if you induce the artist to give false testimony in his work."

It was not long after the anti-Jewish outrages of November, 1938, when I went to see Frau Dr. Schiller again. For the first time, she immediately began to speak of political affairs:

"I was walking through the city with my son, who happened to be home on leave from the Army. We saw a group of children, about twelve years old, armed with iron bars, smashing the windows of Jewish shops. They were led by a man who seemed to be their teacher. I went up to a policeman and asked him to put a stop to it. He replied that he could do nothing, and signed to me to move on. I heard children in the street shout over to others that Christmas presents could be collected free of charge at the Jewish toy shop in X. street. I saw women trying on hats which they had taken out of the smashed windows of a Jewish store. We went home as quickly as we could, for I did not know how much longer I should

be able to restrain my temper if I continued to witness such scenes. I went abroad for a fortnight after that, because it almost drove me mad to think of it."

Not long before that fateful November another event brought certain political realities home to her. It was the German-Czech crisis before Munich.

"I was in Berlin. Troops were marching through Unter den Linden. Most of the people were very solemn and disturbed. But I happened to notice some girls who were shrieking 'Hurrah' as enthusiastically as could be. I could not restrain myself; I went up to them and shouted: 'You fools, you will stop cheering when they are brought back to you, cripples for life!'

"Fortunately, that crisis passed without leading to the outbreak of war. I know that the danger is not over by any means. But I dare not think of it. We have gone through it once already. Another war—it would be the end of all that life means to us. My son . . ."

Another time she told me: "Herr Hitler once said that it was a greater honour to be a German citizen as a scavenger, than to be the king of a foreign country. My son would rather be a scavenger in London than a German university professor."

Now with the outbreak of war once again imminent she was at very great pains to keep up her dignified demeanour, but she made no attempt to turn the conversation into the spheres in which she usually liked to dwell. It was almost as if the very walls of her ancient mansion were trembling when she greeted me with the question—and waited breathlessly for my reply—"Will this be war?"

"Perhaps," was all I could say.

The rows of books around us, the pictures and sculptures and antiquities, seemed to become remote; the air seemed chill, in spite of the August heat outside.

She had been to Greece and Cyprus that summer. Once again she had trodden the paths of classic culture, and indulged in the beauty of Nature and the company of cultured people. Until she reached the German frontier, where she was asked if she had any forbidden newspapers with her, she had not

given as much as a thought to the political situation. And then she had come home to meet her son, who had forty-eight hours' leave from the Army, and he told her that he was off to the Polish frontier, and that the war might soon begin over there. For the first time she was suddenly really conscious of what was happening in this world in which she lived. So far she had been keeping aloof from its realities; at the utmost she had seen the shadows which they cast into her life, but never the real thing, the "zoological garden," as she sometimes called it. She had always turned away from it because she wanted to devote herself, undisturbed, to the service of her own gods. These gods of hers offered her balm and asylum; but they were powerless to protect her against the congregation which was faithful only to the creed of violence. While she was indulging in æsthetic pleasures, they were intent on action. She had persistently closed her eyes to the facts, and there was bound to be an awakening day, and here it was. And it was going to be more horrible for her than even I could realise at the time.

"Nobody wants war," she said. "The students are most unwilling to do 'voluntary' service as farm hands in the east, as they are ordered to do, because this brings them into the orbit of war. It strikes me that very few people are saying '*Heil, Hitler*' these days. Even those who as a rule are so eager to cheer, look gloomy and sorrowful now, because they are dreading the outbreak of war. The grocer where I happened to buy some cheese the other day was the first man I have met so far who welcomes the prospect of war against Poland; he has no sons; and he thinks taxation is intolerably high, and we ought to go to war to make the Poles pay for our guns and aeroplanes. He will regret the very thought of it one day —if he lives to see it. Everywhere there is a shortage of every kind of commodity. Look at our new ration cards. People are underfed and overworked. It would be sheer folly to go to war under these circumstances. I can't believe that they are going to do it. At the Air Ministry a friend of mine told me only a few weeks ago that Germany, for a long time to come, would not take the initiative in beginning a major

war; which goes to show that they do not feel particularly strong. And with that latent revolt which, as General X. told me, is stirring all the time in the Protectorate. . . . Can you really imagine that Hitler will go to war? It would be worse than folly. It would be mass murder. I cannot believe it."

"I can," I said. "For it may well be that the situation might not look any brighter to him if he did not go to war. He has certain economic realities to face. If he does not know how to go on as he is—why, rather than abdicate, he would drag down with him the whole of Germany, the whole of Europe, even the whole world."

Frau Dr. Schiller walked up and down the room nervously. Seemingly without being aware of it herself, she picked up from her writing table the photograph of her son in the uniform of the *Reichswehr* and touched it tenderly. For some moments she meditated in silence.

"I am afraid you may be right. You don't know Herr Hitler, but I do. And I know that he would not hesitate to do such a thing.

"We have changed our minds in the meantime," she continued. "But in 1914, when the World War began, we were all full of enthusiasm. We were convinced of the justice of Germany's cause, and we wholeheartedly supported the Kaiser. To-day we are convinced that our country's cause is criminal and ignoble. I no longer feel any loyalty towards this country. If I had any information that would be useful to the enemy, I should not hesitate to commit the crime of high treason. It is a strange thing, to say this. However cosmopolitan we regarded ourselves as being, we always considered it a real crime to stab one's own country in the back. We should never have thought of denouncing Germany's breaches of the Treaty of Versailles to the Allied Commission. We did not approve of these breaches; but we felt bound in loyalty to our country. I feel no loyalty whatever to this Third Reich of Adolf Hitler's, who is loading himself with the greatest guilt there can be: that of plunging the world into another war."

"That is a pretty dangerous thing to say, especially in this country," I remarked.

"Never mind its being dangerous," she answered haughtily. "I am not afraid of danger. My son will be in much greater danger if the war breaks out."

It was in consequence of this remark that I was reminded of something that I had in mind when I first visited Frau Dr. Schiller; at first I resolutely put it out of my head; but throughout the rest of our conversation it kept coming up into my thoughts, and after long hesitation I at last put it before Frau Dr. Schiller. I did not want to induce her to commit high treason, I said. It was something a trifle less serious that I wanted to ask of her. A situation might arise when I should be in need of a hiding place where I might remain unnoticed for a few days. I knew of few places so well suited for the purpose as this old mansion.

Frau Dr. Schiller was rather shocked by this suggestion. It is true that she had invited me several times to stay at her house for a week-end or so, but, of course, under different circumstances. The hospitality for which I was asking her now was definitely dangerous, and I did not try to deny it. On the other hand—had she not proudly stated only half an hour before that she was not afraid of danger? She was obviously at a loss what to reply. But at last she said how much she admired my courage, and that she would like nothing better than to assist me. But there were her son and her husband to consider. Was she entitled to provoke a danger which might hit them as well? Personally, she assured me again, she would do anything to help me. But this she really could not do. She had no right to do it. But she regretted it ever so much.

Somehow, as I bade her goodbye, I did not feel sorry I had asked her. It was better to know.

. . . . .

Several months later, when I had long since left Germany again, I was looking one day through some German newspapers of September, 1939. In one of them, in the obituary column, I happened to notice the name of Guenther Schiller, son of Professor Ludwig Schiller, of a certain university. He was killed in action in Poland on the third day of the war.

CHAPTER VIII

WHY OLD GRUBER WAS ARRESTED

I HAD BEEN ASKED on one of my visits to Germany to try to find out what had become of Lotte Gruber, with whom we had been out of touch for some time. I had never been at her place before, and I had not been given the exact address, but only a rough description. I had been instructed to take the tram as far as a certain junction and then to follow the main road until I saw a modern housing estate on the right-hand side. Lotte lived on the first floor over a grocer's shop on a street corner in this estate. So I walked up and down the estate to make sure there were not several grocer's shops at street corners. Fortunately, I could find only one, and so I went up to the first floor, but I admit it seemed rather like magic to me when at one of the doors there really was the name of Gruber. I thought my luck was in, and consequently I was firmly convinced that I only had to knock to see Lotte before me.

I knocked, heard steps inside and the door opened, and for a moment I thought that my luck was really holding. At a second glance, however, I realised my error. For the girl before me, though very like Lotte, was her sister Grete. They are both strong and sturdy proletarian girls, with straight, uninteresting hair of a somewhat colourless blonde, silver eyebrows above water-blue eyes, broad, freckled cheeks, and witty dimples. Grete looks less bright and shrewd than Lotte, but she also is full of common sense and sober thoroughness, and with her also you have the impression that, though her features seem to lack refinement, it is there nevertheless, only you do not know at first where it is hidden.

Grete looked at me suspiciously, trying to find a place for me in her memory. I told her that I came to see Lotte. And that Grete and I had also met, years ago—did she not

remember? It occurred to me that the three of us had gone together to see the film *All Quiet on the Western Front.* When was it? In 1932? Or 1931? Ages ago. But Grete knew now who I was. All doubt vanished immediately; there was only shyness left to resist the cordiality with which she invited me in.

Lotte? No, she was not there. She was married now—did I not know that? Her husband worked in the shipyards at Bremen. Certainly she would give me their address. Yes, they were quite well. Only they had to be so very careful, Grete added in a whisper. There was so much spying upon the shipyard workers.

The readiness with which Grete bestowed upon me her unreserved confidence rather shocked me. How easy it would have been for a Nazi spy to lead her into a trap! But having never been active in any part of the movement, she had so unlimited a respect for "the comrades," that it probably never occurred to her that one of them might not be trustworthy. She knew that I was a comrade of her sister Lotte. She required no further testimonial.

Lotte used to be secretary of a trade union branch. She was one of those keen, untiring militants of the trade union movement who were engaged in a permanent struggle against the bosses at the works, the bosses at union headquarters, and the slowness and sluggishness of the membership. The economic crisis and the Nazi advance called for vigorous action by the trade unions, and she was not really sorry when she lost her own job, because that gave her more time to devote to gingering up the others. The political anti-Fascist movement was split from top to bottom and therefore negligible as a political factor, while the trade unions were still by far the strongest and most solidly united anti-Fascist organisations and the only ones capable of taking effective action against the Nazi onslaught. Lotte went about, collecting signatures to petitions and getting resolutions accepted at branch meetings, calling upon the heads of the movement to give the lead which might avert disaster. She was one of many who worked with the same spirit, and who pulled their whole weight. But they did not succeed. The ranks of Hitler's enemies remained split.

And Hitler came to power unopposed. So Lotte tried to save what could be saved from the wreckage. First of all, files and funds and other property from the trade union offices. When the Nazis searched the premises she was there, and she defended every inch of ground. Those were early days and she did not have to face the trained Gestapo, but only some stupid brutes of the S.A., and her shrewdness got the better of their violence. While they were busy piling up books and papers to be confiscated, Lotte, apparently trying to help, substituted harmless files and documents for all those which were liable to endanger comrades or otherwise to be useful to the new rulers. The Nazis never quite managed to understand how it could have happened that they failed to find any important material amongst the papers which were confiscated at Trade Union House.

Later Lotte was arrested. It must have been in 1934, on April 30th. When she woke up after her first night in prison, she heard a strange humming sound penetrating the walls and floor and ceiling of the cell in which she was alone. Gradually she realised that the humming sound made a tune, and that it was the tune of the "Internationale." And when the first group of men prisoners were taking their exercise in the yard below her window, a voice yelled from somewhere behind the iron bars: "Comrades, this is our May Day Demonstration!" When it was her turn to walk round the yard she noticed that some of the other prisoners raised the right fist to the shoulder whenever their eyes met hers. After a while she understood the signal. By a movement reminiscent of the clenched fist salute, they wanted to indicate to her that they were political prisoners, as distinct from the criminals; to the others the signal meant nothing. So Lotte went with her fist raised to her shoulder for the rest of the morning's walk, and with fleeting glances and smiles the others welcomed her in their midst. And it seemed to Lotte that in a way it was less distressing to be in prison than to have to face the Nazis outside. Here at least you had not to make so much of a secret of the fact that you were their enemy.

They released her after a short time, and Lotte went to a

town where she was less well known than at home. The last I heard of her was that she had to avoid the company of active comrades because the Gestapo suspected her of being connected with the illegal trade union movement. That must have been well over two years before. Since then we had lost all trace of her.

I asked Grete whether there had been any further trouble with the Gestapo. She blushed and stammered: Trouble for Lotte—no, there had been nothing of any importance. She had been summoned once to the Gestapo and cross-examined for a whole day; but Lotte seemed to have succeeded again in outwitting the Gestapo with remarkable skill and shrewdness.

"After that all remained quiet?"

"Yes," said Grete, hesitatingly. "They never came for Lotte after that."

"Did they come for anyone else then?"

The girl nodded, trying to hold back her tears.

"Father," she said. "They came for Father."

"And?"

"They arrested him. They kept him for five months."

"When did it happen?"

"Last year in March."

Painfully she forced the words out between her teeth, in a whisper that was almost a sob.

"Did they treat him very horribly?"

She shook her head. "No. They did not take him to a camp, only to prison. It would not have been so bad—but while he was away they got hold of my brother."

"Your brother? But hasn't he been in Prague ever since Hitler came to power?"

Paul Gruber had a narrow escape at that time. The Nazis were after him, not only because he was well known to the Storm-troopers of his district as the leader of a militant group of young anti-Fascists, but particularly because they held him responsible for a very effective illegal leaflet which was distributed a few days after the Reichstag fire. While they were looking for him, the Nazis made it very plain that they

meant to kill him if they got a chance. They did not get it, for he crossed the frontier in time. But they did kill one of his young assistants.

They did not leave it at that, however. Succeeding in suppressing her tears, Grete told me what had happened while her father was in prison. One day mother was summoned to the Gestapo. They told her that she was to go to the concentration camp at D., near the Czechoslovak frontier, to identify the body of her son. No further explanation was given.

"It was all so mysterious and nobody could understand what it meant," Grete told me. "We thought there must have been some mistake. Mother went back to the Gestapo: 'Don't you see, you must have made an error; it can't possibly be my boy. He is in Prague.' They shrugged their shoulders, dismissed her. Were they playing a practical joke on her? But why? There was no doubt in our minds but that it was just a mistake. It would be cleared up in good time. But there was that dreadful suspense. Mother gradually got into a frenzy of fear and horror.

"We had not had news from Paul very frequently. It was so dangerous to write many letters. We had not heard from him for nearly four months.

"Mother went to the concentration camp. They must have been waiting for her, and they looked at her in a strange fashion, mockingly, triumphantly. But perhaps that was only her imagination. They took her to a little room where a dead body was lying on a bench, a horribly mutilated body, with the face disfigured beyond recognition. The jaws must have been smashed, and the teeth knocked out, and all over the body there were wounds and marks of ill-treatment. And they asked her if she knew who it was, in the tone in which they might have asked: 'What is your name and address?' Nobody could have recognised him. But she knew it was her son. She says she knew without looking. And there could be no mistake about it. That was Paul.

"They said they would send her the ashes."

"And—you never discovered how it happened?" I asked the girl.

Grete shook her head.

"Is it possible that he came deliberately? That he was intent on some illegal work?" I wanted to know.

Again Grete shook her head. "No. He was absolutely determined not to return, because he knew it would cost him his life."

There were steps outside. Grete went and brought her parents in. The mother, small, round and friendly, looking tired. One could see that she was ill and suffering. She recognised me, and became quite excited: of course, she had seen me with Lotte! There was a great deal of bitterness in old Gruber's wrinkled workman's face; but his eyes were full of life and vigour, and of that sly, witty shrewdness so characteristic of Lotte. Altogether I found she was much like her father; and obviously he was very proud of his youngest girl.

They were both so pleased that I had come to see Lotte. "It is good to know," old Gruber muttered cordially, "that comrades keep in touch with each other, that you don't forget your people. Gustav also comes from time to time," he added sadly.

"Gustav was my brother's pal," Grete explained to me. "Almost like a brother."

They invited me to have lunch with them. "Do stay," the mother implored me. "Father is so glad when there is somebody to talk to."

So I stayed. At first we spoke about Lotte. It seemed strange to me that the mother always referred to her as "our little one." It was so unlike Lotte to be called a "little one." They told me that the young couple had been investing all their savings in a rather extravagant wireless set. It was more important to them than the furniture. "It's our only link with the outside world," said old Gruber. "I am glad they have not been able to buy a motor bike yet," he grumbled. "It would soon be requisitioned by the Army."

How he hated the Nazis! He had been a trade unionist ever since he started work in his early youth, and up to the beginning of the World War he was a member of the Social-Democratic Party. He was one of those level-headed, reliable,

highly qualified workers who formed the backbone of the trade union movement. After his release from prison, he told me, he was dismissed from the factory. But he was given a new job, at the engine works. He was earning a little less there, and, of course, he was no longer among his old mates. But at the new place they treated him as though he was an old pal of theirs.

"It is because they know I have been in prison, and what happened to my son. And also because I am an old trade unionist and shop steward," old Gruber explained. "There is nothing extraordinary in that. Men who grew up in the old traditions turn to former trade unionists when they want advice; they never go to the Nazi 'men of confidence.' Unofficially, our old system of shop stewards, elected by the workers, still exists. Officially, their functions are now performed by the 'men of confidence' selected by the employers and the Party. But the position of these men is very shaky, and in nine cases out of ten nobody will accept the honorary function of a 'man of confidence' unless he is bribed by a rise of wages. Most workers will sooner refuse an increase of pay than assume the task of defending the 'socialism' of the Nazis in the midst of their workmates."

"And how do the Nazis treat you?" I asked old Gruber.

"The Nazis?" He laughed contemptuously. "It depends on what you call a Nazi. We have plenty of *Blockwalters*, the unpaid agents of the Gestapo, who have to report the views and actions of small groups of workers. I don't know, of course, what they tell the Gestapo. At any rate, they come to me, shake hands and warn me to be careful, because they have orders to keep an eye on me, and they all complain about present conditions. I doubt if there is one *Blockwalter* at our works who would not be glad if the present system were ended.

"But we also had a real Nazi at the works," Gruber added ironically. "A man who wore his swastika badge proudly and sang hymns to Hitler in the cloak-room. He was in our department for a short time only. The work must have been too hard for his tender hands. And our boys, who as a rule gossip about everything and everybody, never even told him

that there was an ex-jailbird in the machine-room. They keep their mouths shut whenever there is a Nazi about."

Gruber described how one morning, in the wash-room, the Nazi made a little speech to them. The Polish Government, he said, was going to suffer the fate of the Czech and Austrian Governments, and anyone who tried to deny Adolf Hitler the living space he required for the German people was doomed. Some workers put questions to him, either openly provocative, or merely designed to lead the speaker into a trap. In the end one man, a very quiet sort, said calmly: "Granted you are right, old chap—but even if Hitler conquered three-quarters of the globe for Germany's *Lebensraum* —we workers would still be fooled as we always are." Nobody replied. Not even the Nazi.

Gruber spoke with that simplicity and complete lack of eloquence which is so typical of the trade-union organiser as distinct from the mere propagandist. He looked for success, not as a result of rousing speeches, but rather as a result of the confidence that is built up in the course of years by courage and reliability and solidarity in the small things no less than in the larger issues of everyday life.

At a time when freedom of speech and organisation is suppressed, the propagandist has to find an entirely new mode of action if he is not to lapse into the position of a mere onlooker. Those who have worked and lived like Gruber, on the other hand, need make no great change. True, there are no longer organisations or arbitration courts or social legislation to fall back on. But essentially they continue to work as before among their workmates, and since their voice has never been very loud they need not muffle it very much in order to avoid the ear of the Nazi. One or other of these old workers are, from time to time, thrown into a concentration camp or otherwise rendered harmless to the Nazis. But there are too many of them, and they are the most highly qualified craftsmen on which industry has to rely. And one day they will form the nucleus of revolt in the workshops and factories.

"There are Nazis amongst the youngsters," Gruber pointed out to me. "Some of them are really dangerous ones, ruthless

and unscrupulous. Of course, we try to give them an idea of what conditions were like when we had our own trade unions, instead of their labour front. Still—in so far as there are any reliable Nazis at all in Germany, they are to be found mainly amongst the youngsters.

"The skilled workers, on the other hand, are gradually becoming conscious of their strength once more, in spite of a system of labour slavery designed to keep wages down at a time when nothing is so highly valued as their labour power. They can refuse a worker permission to change his job. They can force him to do overtime. But if owing to real or alleged weariness he works at rapidly diminishing returns, they can do nothing. If he goes on sick leave with every little cold he contracts, if his output becomes defective, because he cannot work at the speed required of him—the Nazis are powerless. In fact, it has become impossible to distinguish between deliberate sabotage and mere weariness. We are all overworked, we all feel that we cannot keep it up much longer, especially if we are not given more nourishing food. Tiredness makes people careless, not only of their work, but also of risks they run. Many of the rapidly increasing number of accidents are due to sheer carelessness. I have had ample opportunity to observe it in our department. But tiredness also reduces people's fear of the Nazis. Dash it all—some of us would not mind anything if only we could get out of the treadmill somehow. And others make use of these conditions in order to inflict the greatest possible damage on the Nazis.

"The trouble is that the workers are actually overworked, and therefore do not stop to think and plan carefully how they can assert themselves against the Nazis. And, secondly, the workers are shifted about so much from one factory to another, and thence to the fortifications, that it becomes increasingly difficult to build up a group of reliable workers anywhere."

Grete and her mother were looking admiringly at the old worker, who was by no means forgetting his dinner as he talked. We had eggs, and potatoes fried in real butter—what strange extravagance, I thought. They must have done it specially in my honour, for with the small butter ration they

could not possibly be in the habit of frying potatoes in butter, and they could not afford many eggs either. Frau Gruber was anxious that I should not stop eating; and old Gruber said he wished they could invite guests for lunch every day, for their presence seemed to improve the quality of the meal. Whereupon his wife became quite confused and blushed.

The old man would soon have to be off to work. His shift began at 2 p.m.

"I understand you were in prison," I said, tentatively. "Why was that?"

Old Gruber raised his eyebrows and scrutinised me quietly for a moment.

"Yes. I was in prison." He forced it out between his teeth in a way that made one feel his pain and hatred. "You want to know why? I understand that a neighbour of mine denounced me for having made derogatory remarks about our 'Führer and Chancellor.' But that was only a pretence. They arrested me—in order to be able to lay hands on my boy."

Frau Gruber got up to look for her handkerchief. The old man looked at me with sad and bitter eyes.

"They would not have been able to kill my boy without previously arresting me," he said gravely. "Don't think these are the illusions of an old man who has gone a bit dotty! I still have my wits about me. What I am telling you is the bare truth, and this truth I shall reaffirm until my dying day.

"A short time before my wife was ordered to go to that concentration camp," he said, "I was paid a visit in my cell by the Gestapo agent who used to cross-examine me, and two others whom I recognised by their manner of speech to be people from the Sudeten districts. They were wearing white socks, as the Nazis in Czechoslovakia did when they were forbidden to go about in uniforms. It all happened before Munich, and the Czechoslovak Republic was still intact. It was a few weeks after the invasion of Austria.

"So there I was with the two men in white socks and the Gestapo agent facing me, and the two Sudeten gangsters were staring at me as though I were some strange animal. They never spoke to me; they only made brief remarks to

each other the meaning of which I failed to catch. When they came in, the Gestapo man said to the others: 'This is the one!' I had to stand at attention all the while. Finally, the Gestapo man spoke to me, and it struck me even at the time that he did not do it in his usual Prussian official voice, but almost playfully, with a touch of irony.

" 'You have a son?' he asked.

"I said: 'Yes.'

" 'Where is he?' he asked.

"I said: 'In Prague.'

" 'Oh, is he?' the black devil said, with a curious glance at the other two, who seemed to bite their lips in order not to burst out laughing. Then they went out.

"I was left to try to find a clue to this strange incident. Why had they come to see me, these Sudeten chaps with their brutal gangsters' faces? Why did they stare at me like that all the time? Why did they come to see me in particular among all those prisoners? For I could hear that none of the other cells were unlocked.

"All of a sudden it occurred to me that these men were from Sudetenland. And Sudetenland is in Czechoslovakia. And Prague is also in Czechoslovakia. And our Paul was in Prague. And they had asked about Paul. What if . . .

"I thought at that time that it was nothing but a prison nightmare, and that I must beware of becoming obsessed by such nightmares if I was to get out of that hell with full control of myself and not a senile old man. I did not realise then how clear-sighted I was at that moment. You see, until this day we have no clue whatever to the mysterious death of our boy. The nightmare which I had in prison after the visit of those gangsters still appears to offer the most likely solution.

"We knew that they meant to kill our son; and that they were extremely sorry they could not get their hands on him, since he was in Prague. One of our local Nazis is now a big noise at the Gestapo, and he had not forgotten Paul. So they arrested me. And they sent those two brutes to see my son in Prague, and they told him that his father was in prison, and

would be kept in custody as a hostage until Paul gave himself up. And so Paul did give himself up to save his father.

"You see, they could not have taken him from Prague by force. And he never went near the frontier region. He had never been in the Sudeten district in all those years. So if they induced him to come to Germany it must have been by means of blackmail. Our boy, you see, would have done anything to save his parents' lives. That is," old Gruber hurriedly corrected himself, "not anything, I must not say that. He would never have betrayed his comrades. But he would sacrifice his own life, I know that. Our boy was like that!"

Mrs. Gruber was quietly sobbing at the other end of the table. One or two little tears were running down old Gruber's wrinkled cheeks, but he took no notice of them. The muscles of his forehead showed rather more prominently than before.

"But rest assured," he said very emphatically, as if he were pledging himself for the rest of his days, "that I am like that too. I shall have my revenge."

He lapsed into a silence which I did not dare to interrupt. The meal was over. Grete and her mother were busy clearing the table. On the sideboard I noticed a small photograph of a young man in an open cricket shirt, laughing merrily, with a basket of apples on his arm.

"Is that him?" I asked Grete as she came in again from the kitchen.

"No," she replied. "That is Gustav."

"We shall put up a photograph of our boy," said old Gruber, still with the same sinister emphasis, "on the day on which his murder is avenged. They will have to atone for it—and when I say that, they are not just empty words. The murderers were in my cell, and so I know who they are. And though they have all the same brutish faces, these gangsters in brown and black uniforms, I shall know how to recognise those two criminals from the Sudetenland, and with their last breath they will regret having murdered my son."

It was past one o'clock. Grete brought a packet of sandwiches and some apples and a flask of coffee, and put them into

her father's bag, which was hanging behind the door. Then she put his heavy boots in front of him. Slowly he took his slippers off, and as he put his boots on he said:

"I am not the only one who has an account to settle with the Nazis. Hundreds and thousands up and down the country are waiting for the day. We shall never be able to repay them in kind—if they were tormented with all the tortures which their own sadistic minds have invented, the brutes will never suffer all the sufferings which they have inflicted upon us. But when the day of revenge comes, then I can only warn you people not to waste your tears on the cruelties that we shall inflict on the enemy. You can go about protecting animals against cruelty if you like. But do not try to protect the Nazis against the hatred which has been accumulating in our hearts during these years. The hour of revenge will be horrible for them. And though I am an old man, I shall not rest before that hour strikes."

"Don't talk nonsense," said Mrs. Gruber, frightened. "We shall be satisfied if we live to see the day when we can breathe freely again."

"I shall not be satisfied," muttered old Gruber.

He kept grumbling and cursing and grousing until he was ready to go to work.

"Mark my words," he said, bidding me goodbye, "this war which the Nazis begin will not end with the Nazis in power."

And then he came back to remind Grete and Mrs. Gruber that there must be some of those nice plums left from their garden, and there was the cake which they had intended to have when Lotte came home. They might make up a bit of a parcel. It might be nice for me to have on the journey.

And then he was off with the door banging behind him.

"He can't let his mind rest," sighed Mrs. Gruber apologetically, as though she had to find an excuse for what he had just said. "Revenge and hatred is the beginning and end of his thoughts since our boy was killed. Who would have thought that father was going to turn like this, he who could never bear to see an animal suffer!"

"Animals can't be criminals. But the Nazis are," I replied.

Grete busied herself preparing that parcel for me, and I was unable to prevent Mrs. Gruber including a bar of chocolate which she must have kept for some special purpose somewhere in the depths of her sideboard.

When I left, Grete accompanied me to the door, and there she whispered into my ear:

"Supposing something happens to you on your way? . . ."

"What then?" I asked.

"Will you admit that you have been to see us?"

"Why should I? I doubt if anyone could have noticed me coming in, and I shall be careful as I go out."

"Be sure not to mention it whatever you do," Grete implored me. "If they came again—Mother would not survive it."

I reassured her. And then I went.

CHAPTER IX

WHY DID YOU COME BACK?

I AM RELUCTANT TO speak about my meeting with Herbert. The unreserved confidence and respect which he has for me—it embarrasses me, for I do not feel that I deserve it. It happened that it was I who worked with him at a period of his life when he felt very strongly that he was engaged in a mission and accomplishing it. Previously his life had been governed largely by circumstances and by his own fancies and inclinations—like most people's lives; and later came prison, and the agonies and conflicts which he was going to tell me about. It must have seemed to him then that the whole of our illegal movement had been crushed, physically and, in a way, also morally, under the wheels of the Gestapo. To him his arrest meant the end.

I remember so well the evening when we first went out together to stick leaflets up. It was a few days before one of Hitler's plebiscites, the one which took place shortly after the great purge of the Nazi Party, in June 1934. Our stickibacks, which we had printed ourselves, contained four words only:

Have courage
Say No!

Herbert was eighteen or nineteen at the time. It was his first "action." I found that he was a good comrade for that sort of work: not foolhardy and not forgetful of the danger, but not frightened of it either. Our stickibacks were very small, so that they could easily be carried in the palm of the hand and pressed on suitable objects in passing. Suitable objects were banisters in tenement houses, the railings of gardens and bridges, lamp-posts, signboards, seats in parks, tramcars, trains and waiting-rooms. We tried to outdo each other with bright ideas to where they would be most effective.

Under the slots of letter-boxes! on the display racks at newspaper kiosks! On writing-desks at the post office! In telephone call boxes! In front of a poster announcing the details of the plebiscite, Herbert could not resist temptation. I protested because it was a street corner where we could easily be observed without noticing it. But Herbert, apparently reading the poster attentively, had already pressed his right hand against it. At that moment some people came and stopped behind us, to read the poster. Herbert stood firmly where he was, without removing his hand. And then, with the utmost unconcern, he turned to me, said, "Finished?" and we went away. "They must have noticed that it was you who stuck that label," I said, pulling him hurriedly round the next corner. He only laughed. "Don't you worry—I pulled it off again when I noticed there was someone behind us."

We carried through many "actions" together after that first experiment; and we learned to trust and respect each other. But when defeat came, and the loneliness of prison life, Herbert, young and somewhat romantic as he was, must have exaggerated this confidence until it grew into something approaching hero-worship; and this may serve to explain his behaviour during this short visit, in the course of which I hardly spoke to him.

I had not intended to go to see him. But Franz asked me to, if it were at all possible. Franz was the leader of the local column of action. He had been unable to establish a proper contact with Herbert since his release from prison, he told me. Herbert seemed to be avoiding his old comrades. It might be that he was afraid of being observed by the Gestapo and rearrested. But Franz doubted if it was only that. He wanted me to try to find out whether Herbert really meant to turn his back on the movement. Herbert would surely not refuse to meet me.

So I found means of meeting him. He was obviously aghast when he saw me. He knew that I had gone abroad at the time of his arrest, and nobody told him that I had returned to Germany. He would never have thought, he stammered, that

I would ever set foot on German soil again. And then he began to speak. And this is, roughly, what he told me.

. . . . .

What made you come back?

I don't know why I am asking that question. Because I know the answer. I knew it the very moment I saw you. You have been in safety. You have been abroad, free again and out of danger. And now you have staked all that and come back to Germany. I am not going to ask you how you managed to get back without being caught. We have learned not to ask unnecessary questions. But here you are. And still working as we used to work. You see, you need not tell me anything. I know. I knew it the very moment I saw you.

I can so well imagine what you must have felt when you were outside the Third Reich, in safety. You knew that I had been arrested, and so many others. That most of those who were still free were suspect or frightened. You were still here when they began arresting our people; we thought then that only one group was involved. You heard about all this, out there in France or England or wherever you were. And you must also have heard that some of us were given rather a rough handling by the Gestapo. While you were free and out of danger. And you realised that this was the end of our work. Since the Nazis came to power we lived heart and soul for this illegal movement which we built up. And now the groups were broken up, and our illegal paper could not be produced any longer, and all the people who had received it regularly every month were waiting in vain for news from underground. There was no more writing of anti-Fascist slogans on the factory walls, and the voice of free workers was not heard at the Brown May Day demonstration. The Nazi district leader no longer need be nervous when speaking at a mass meeting on the Market Square—the loudspeakers will not cease to function in the middle of his address, and maybe people would even forget to enquire into the origin of his newly acquired fortune. Indeed, our movement had been destroyed, and you knew it, although you were so far away. You must have heard the malicious, cynical voice of the police

inspector when he said, priding himself on his great achievement: "What an amount of trouble we have had with this gang! But it is all rounded up at last."

At the same time you witnessed Hitler's advance as we all witnessed it: The invasion of Austria, the Czech crisis, the Munich Agreement, and the way he trampled it underfoot less than six months later when he destroyed what Munich had left of Czechoslovakia; and thence the headlong rush towards war!

All the nations of Europe tremble while he dashes forward triumphantly; and so far nobody has proved capable of stopping his advance.

People have been won over by the greatness of his success —because nothing succeeds like success! Is he not a new Napoleon? Is he not greater than Napoleon? For he has subjected to his will whole nations before having to fight a single battle, and as he ventures to enter the arena of war he does so as one who has to his credit an uninterrupted record of victory. Do not his results speak for his methods?

If we are not to close our eyes to realities, we must admit that more and more people think in these terms, especially among the younger generation. And you were not used to closing your eyes to realities, so you came to the conclusion that the underground opposition must not be silenced, that we have to act—to do what is in our power even at the last moment to avert the outbreak of a new world war, or, if that should prove impossible, at least to make sure that Hitler's home front is a battle front. To those of us who thought we were too weak, you were going to show how we could make ourselves strong, and for those of us who thought there was no point in risking our lives, you were going to bring yours to share the danger.

This is how you saw things while you were abroad. I knew it all the time I was in the concentration camp, and in prison, and during the trial. "Another who has become a refugee like the rest," Theo said of you once when I met him in the prison yard. "No, not like the rest," I said to myself when I was back in my cell. The rest—how many of them forget!

How many of them let themselves become absorbed by care for their future, and a few personal friends and relatives. But you would never forget. You would realise how things stood with us and how much you were needed. And I was sure that one day you would come back. "What an amount of trouble we have had with this gang," said the police inspector. Who was there to trouble them when we were immobilised? The Catholic Church or some Protestant parsons, or a handful of capitalists whose profits were declining in the Third Reich? Through the prison walls and across the frontiers I heard you reply: none of these will do the job for us. We must fight on. Remember the Twelfth of February of the Austrian workers and the heroic battle for freedom in Spain. The silence of a graveyard will reign all over Europe if we do not act. And to you it became like an obsession, this idea that we must act, and every item of news and every sleepless night increased that obsession, until you boarded the train that brought you back.

You arranged to meet me although you must have known that I was still under police supervision. I know why you came to see me. You want to find out if it is true that I am broken. You come to try to make me take my share of the work. You do not believe that I can have changed so much since the last time we met.

The last time we met—I am sure you remember it as well as I do.

We were sitting in the Operncafé, in a half-hidden corner. It was Saturday night. The Café was crowded. People were coming from the matinée at the Opera, or about to attend the evening performance. Many of them were beautifully dressed —and everybody was cheerful, intensely cheerful. They seemed to have forgotten their daily troubles, and not to be affected by the reign of terror under which we all live. And we were sitting there too, smoking our cigarettes, sipping our coffee, and looking harmless and cheerful, just like everybody else. For we have learned to hide our real feelings, to live like actors on the stage of the Nazi Reich.

I was just about to light a cigarette—I remember that my

lighter refused to work and I was trying to discover what was wrong—when you leant forward and told me in a low voice that Karl had been arrested and that I might well be the next on the list. What was I going to do?

I must admit that it was rather a shock to me. I quite forgot my cigarette-lighter, and I still have it at home unrepaired. I had a queer feeling that this was the end.

But I said quite calmly that naturally the safest course would be to leave home at once. If I crossed the frontier that would end my illegal work in Germany once and for all. If I disappeared but remained in the country, I would be unable to register with the police or take up a job anywhere, and I would endanger those who offered me hospitality. In either case, I would have to abandon the job which I had held ever since I left school, and which was so favourable for our illegal work. My boss would sound the alarm, the works police would follow the matter up and report to the Secret Police, who would consider my escape a confirmation of their suspicions against me, and that would make things worse for Karl and the others. On the other hand, if I stayed at work everything would be as before in the event of it proving a false alarm, or at worst I might still have a chance of "proving my innocence" and getting out of prison within a reasonable time. Therefore it seemed that I ought rather to run the risk of being arrested.

"I think so too," you replied. "Hans and Emmy denied everything and they got away with it. Maybe you will manage that too, if it comes to the worst. They cannot know much of what you have done, anyway."

You said it just like this, perfectly simply and calmly, without an extra word. This alone made me feel strong and confident. For we were neither heroes nor cowards, and we were not out to sacrifice ourselves on the altar of the great cause. We were out to do what we considered important and necessary, and our duty, and if that involved certain risks we had to face them as a matter of course. And since we were all facing them there was no need to discuss it. But it gave me the feeling that all together we formed one single body, of

which I was a little part. And my decision appeared so impersonal: one of our comrades had to run the risk of being caught, although he had a chance of getting away in time. That comrade happened to be me. That was a mere detail.

For you and I and the others were welded together into an order of fighters by that bond of solidarity which only a common ideal, mutual confidence and common suffering can create. We did not know comradeship like this before the illegal work united us, and those who have not taken their part in this work can never understand it. It has enabled us to endure life in this hell of crime and cruelty which is Germany to-day. Our community was not like the Nazis' national unity of oppressors and oppressed, and the laws we obeyed were not their dictatorial decrees, nor did we fear their terror. We were in fact among the last free citizens of Germany. You and I, like two free citizens, shook hands. There was no need for further words.

I had three days to complete my preparations. I went once again through all my things, and informed certain comrades. On Wednesday morning, at 3 a.m., they came and arrested me. I understand that they nearly caught you that same day, and that you managed to escape at the last moment.

I knew what I had to expect from the Nazis. I had heard enough about the Gestapo terror. Yet it is different when you actually experience it. The beginning is the worst, when you are waiting in your cell, and you know that at any moment they may drag you into their cellars and torture you. And you do not know whether you will have the strength and the presence of mind that is necessary in such circumstances. I kept thinking of those who had gone through that hell without yielding in any way, and I made up my mind not to fall short of their achievements. Still, fear held me in its grip. Not so much the fear of the pain which I might have to suffer, as the agony of being so entirely in their hands that they might do with me just as they pleased. But I kept thinking of the aims for which we were fighting, I pictured it to myself as concretely as I possibly could, a world without war, oppression and exploitation; and I contrasted it with the barbarian

aims of those sadistic criminals into whose hands I had fallen, and it made me feel infinitely superior to them, and so helped me to retain my self-control.

The investigation by the Gestapo, complete with third-degree examinations and other horrors lasted ten weeks, and I got through that all right. But afterwards something happened which was much more terrible to bear, and I have not managed to get over it to this day, I doubt if I ever shall.

You know, of course, that Werner gave the police a great deal of information about our work, and that my arrest was due to this. I discovered it only two months afterwards. What made him speak? That was the question which tormented me for weeks. Had they tortured him terribly? Was he frightened? Had he broken down under the strain of solitary confinement? Had they deceived him with promises that nothing would happen to him or to us if only he admitted everything? Had they managed to give him the impression that they knew all about us, anyway, and that he would not be making things any worse by speaking? It all seemed so unlikely. The police knew so many details which he should not have given away under any circumstances and which could only make his own sentence more severe as well as ours.

Was the explanation simply that he had turned traitor? All the evidence seemed to point to that conclusion. Yet it could not be true. I did not for a single moment believe that it was true. For what would become of our faith in this brotherhood of ours if we admitted the possibility that one of us could become a miserable traitor?

No, Werner had not become a traitor. At least not consciously.

They had driven him mad.

And Karl told me—he always managed to find out everything—that he had given most of his evidence in a lunatic asylum.

Werner had gone mad. Werner was not Werner any longer, and I did not know who he was, or what had happened to him.

I have never spoken about this before. It is so terrible. Can anyone understand how terrible it is? That is why I have been afraid to meet people since I was released from prison. They would ask me about Werner, and the trial, and how it all came about. What was I to reply?

For Werner, you see, was more to me than a comrade. He was my friend. We were kids together—we lived in the same street—we were at school together. We shared everything. And we joined the Party together. That was not long before the illegal work began. He was such a good comrade, and everyone liked him. In the illegal work, he was better than most of us. I sometimes feared that he was too successful, for we tend to neglect necessary precautions if things always work out well.

I think that is what happened to Werner. He had become a bit careless and rash. He was full of enthusiasm for the work, and he rather enjoyed this life of constant tension and thrill and adventure.

One day he lost a letter in a bus. His name and address were on the envelope. Some very incriminating matter was inside.

Had anyone found the letter? Had it been taken to the police? Impossible to know. Werner did not go home again, to avoid being trapped. He felt so ashamed of himself for having lost the letter, that he did not want to ask us for money. He just tramped about the country, sleeping in fields or barns. Sometimes he stayed with comrades in other towns. But he could not remain anywhere long, in case he should be asked to prove his identity. For six months he was wandering about like this. Then it happened that the police came to search the house of a peasant who had offered him hospitality. They did not come because of Werner, but for quite different reasons. They found an illegal leaflet and arrested the peasant, and they took Werner along as well, probably because he had no papers. I know very little about what happened to him after that. Except that six months later his parents were informed that he was in the asylum. But that was after my arrest, and I only heard about it recently.

I did not see Werner until the trial. I have not seen him since. I hardly remember anything of the trial except Werner. At the end I did not even know what my own sentence was. I have a dim recollection of a large bare room. The windows were rather high up, and through them you could see nothing but a scrap of grey sky. The clouds did not seem to move and no bird passed by. Every time I looked up I saw the same plain grey sky outside. There was a lawyer who seemed to be excited all the time, I never knew what about. He was continually jumping up and sitting down again, and dashing outside and hurrying back. One of the judges looked tremendously bored. He was chewing the end of his pencil all the time, probably to keep himself awake. One of the ushers sometimes looked at us full of sympathy and pity and understanding. But I never responded, for my mind was so occupied with Werner.

I was not really thinking. I was benumbed by what I saw before my eyes. To this day I cannot help shuddering with horror when I think of the trial, and I still see before me that servile smile, that glassy look, those arms that hung as though they were screwed to the shoulders. His head seemed to be stuck stiffly on his neck, like that of a cheap doll, and his suit flapped about as though there were no living body inside. Years of Gestapo torture could not be more horrible than those hours in the dock during the trial; and for me there is no forgetting. . . .

We were in the dock, the rest of us, when Werner was led in. He came stalking in, almost in a military manner, between two guards. He looked neither to left nor right, but always stared straight in front of him. If only his face had been changed beyond recognition! But it was Werner's face. And yet it seemed that of a stranger. Something was missing from it—the blood had gone out of it—no, that's not it, it was not the blood that was missing, it was something much deeper than the blood—it can only have been the soul. He did not look like an idiot, and he seemed able to follow the proceedings of the court; but it seemed as if it were just the surface of his intelligence that was left to him, that underneath all were

empty. And it is just what is underneath that makes a human being. I had the impression that they had stuffed a dead body and installed a mechanism to make it move about and even speak. And yet it remained a dead body, and it was so ridiculous and humiliating to be playing with a corpse as if it was alive.

It was the corpse of my best friend.

They placed him at the far end of the dock. There he sat very erect, unmoving and unmoved, and his eyes were like glass, his hair was dull, his skin was almost grey. But his mouth was smiling, smiling all the time, a terrible servile and helpless and artificial smile. He looked at the Bench all the time, and smiled at the Bench, and never looked round, never even seemed to notice any of us. And the judges did not seem to notice that there was one amongst us who was not really alive. The one judge kept on chewing the end of his pencil, and the others, with their supercilious air, did not trouble to scrutinise us. To them we were like worms; you do not look at them, you tread them underfoot. Do you know, I felt ashamed because one of us, reduced to such a creature, was sitting there before them. And he had been my friend. I do not remember how long the proceedings had been going on when Werner was called upon to repeat the evidence he had given in the preliminary investigation. That led to the most terrible scene of all.

Werner rose to his feet, promptly and smartly, like a well-oiled machine, and his smile became more servile still. He looked very much like a slave whose only desire is to satisfy his master. His voice sounded like a gramophone record, and it was absolutely devoid of expression or variation. It just droned on, at the same pitch, for hours on end.

Actually, he spoke for three hours. Without a single pause, in that mechanical voice. The judge asked him after a while whether he did not want a rest, and he replied: "No, my lord. I am quite all right. I don't need a rest, thank you very much, my lord." And on he went. Three hours!

To me it seemed like three centuries. I thought I was going mad too. I gazed at him, trying to make him look round, if

only for a fraction of a second. If he would meet my eyes, if only for a single moment, he would not be able to go on speaking like that. But he did not turn round. I whispered his name: Wérner! and again, slightly louder: Werner! The third time the usher who was friendly to us approached and reminded me to keep quiet. Werner did not hear me. At times I thought that it must all be just a bad dream. Surely I would wake up presently and everything would be all right. You sometimes have bad dreams when you are in prison; it's natural. But then I realised that this time it was reality. And gradually I grew resigned. Can you imagine what it is like when you have salt rubbed into an open wound? It hurts madly, and it does not stop hurting, and yet you get used to the pain. The pain takes possession of you, body and soul. It is no use complaining or trying to defend yourself against it. You are doomed. And you can only hold your breath and wait for the end of the torture, if there be an end.

There was an end. After three hours. During these three hours he had said everything he knew. There was no purpose in what he said, he did not denounce anyone in particular and no one was spared. He simply said everything he knew. Everything. As though he had to empty himself of it once and for all. As far as I know, every word he said was true. It was like a gramophone record that repeats every sound, truly and faithfully. If some of our comrades and some of our activities and methods were not mentioned, it was only because Werner did not know about them.

It began with our attempts at school to set up a branch of the Socialist Students' Association; he spoke about the first May Day Demonstration in which we had marched; he revealed what office everyone held in the Party, and who had been most energetic in the anti-Nazi struggle. Fortunately he had not been with us for long before the illegal work began, and therefore he did not know many comrades by their real names.

He described how and when we started organising our underground activities after the Nazis came to power. He spoke about the groups, about the illegal papers and how we

distributed them, how and where we held meetings, the work in the factories and in the Air Raid Protection League. He gave away our illegal safety precautions, and he said as much as he knew about our relations with groups in other localities and with the movement abroad. Fortunately, he was not well informed on these matters.

He revealed everything up to the point when he lost the letter in the bus. Then his voice suddenly changed, it quivered as he stammered: "And then I went away." With these words he sat down and did not say another word until the end of the trial.

When Werner had ceased to speak the proceedings of the court were interrupted for a while.

By his last words I had been shaken out of the agony I had been enduring these three hours. Had he suddenly woken up? Did that vibration in his voice indicate that he had at last become aware of what he was doing? Again I fixed my eyes on him, and in spite of the repeated warnings of the guards I called him by his name. But he still sat in the same attitude as before, and his lips continued to smile. He showed no trace of weariness after the three hours' speech he had just delivered.

I do not know how much longer the trial dragged on. The judge seemed to like me, or else they thought that I might yet become a good Nazi; they sentenced me to no more than eighteen months. But they sentenced Karl to imprisonment for life on the strength of the evidence which Werner had given.

My time in prison would have been quite tolerable if the spectre of Werner had not constantly haunted me. You have so much time for thinking when you are in prison. But being free has made things more difficult still.

Conditions are easier inside. You bear no great responsibility once the trial is over. Here and there you can help a comrade, or establish a contact. But as a rule there is not much to do, and no grave problems face you there. Once you have made up your mind not to allow yourself to be defeated by the prison atmosphere, it is not so horrible if you can expect to get out after a relatively short period. Of course, you can

never be sure of being released at the end of your sentence. There is always the danger that they will put you into a concentration camp afterwards. But I did not think about that. And in fact they did release me.

So one day the gates of prison opened again. Again I could see a sky which was free to extend over the whole world—which was not enclosed by the walls of the prison yard. While I was inside I always thought that the sky was a convict like me, for the tiny piece which I could see of it was shut in like me between the grey brick walls of prison.

I was free. I was passing through streets again, where there were shops and tramcars and buses, and people rushing about as they do every other day; for this day of my release from prison was to them just like any other day. My parents came to meet me at the gates. Mother held a big bunch of flowers in her hands, tulips. When had I seen tulips last? I felt dizzy and helpless. They were so pleased to get me home again, and they thought I must be happy, because I was free.

But I was not happy.

I knew that somewhere our comrades would be waiting for me to return to the work. In spite of all that had happened, the work was bound to be going on somehow.

At first I had to report to the police twice a week, and they imposed a 10 p.m. curfew on me. It would have been foolhardy to meet the comrades. But was that the only reason why I did not try to meet any of them?

I could not help seeing many people I knew. They asked what it had been like, and whether I was not sorry now that I had been such a fool as to endanger my life by doing illegal work, and surely I would never do such things again. And did I know about Werner—think of his poor parents!—and, incidentally, had he not been a friend of mine?

How I hate such gossip! I wish I could hide somewhere to get away from it! I wish I need not meet anybody at all. In prison no one talked like that.

But now I am at liberty! When do I intend to take up the illegal work again?

There was no need for you to come to put that question to

me. For I know you did come to put it to me. But believe me, I have had it before me all the time, although I tried my best to avoid facing it while I was in prison. I knew that I could not avoid facing it for long once I was outside again. That is why I loathe it so much, this so-called liberty, which has been restored to me. Inside, there was no need to take decisions, now . . . I must . . .

Do you know what this decision means to me? You see, during the trial, while Werner was speaking, something was shattered within me, something which previously had given me strength for our work. Since then I am paralysed. I cannot bear the idea that I might have to go through it all again—and—that I too might become like Werner. Couldn't that happen? Am I better than he used to be? If they could destroy his mind, why could they not destroy mine one day? And to take up the work with that idea in my mind, seeing, in my mind's eye, myself, with waxlike limbs, with a glassy look, and with that same servile smile which Werner wore as he stood before the court——

Don't you understand that I cannot bear that idea? That I want to run away, as far as possible, to escape that idea?

And don't you also understand that I am afraid to meet the other comrades again? Everyone reminds me that I ought to return. How can they grasp what it is that is holding me back? They want to re-establish that community in which we used to live. But it will never be the same again. The spectre of Werner will always be there, undermining our faith and our confidence in each other.

They will say that I have become frightened. And it is true in a way. I am frightened, terribly frightened. Not just of the Nazis, the Gestapo, the concentration camp. I am frightened of this whole way of living, of never belonging to myself, of always being a wheel on a vehicle moving forward towards its goal. Oh, I want it to move forward, further and further, yet I cannot bear constantly turning, and turning, and turning. . . . I will admit to you that I have been tempted by the idea of tearing myself loose from this machine, just being myself again and nothing more. How nice it would be,

I thought, if I married Erna, and we had a nice little flat, and went places together, and had children, and lived very much as most people do. Immediately I came out of prison, of course, I could not do it, because Erna was still serving her sentence, but she will be out soon, and then . . .

I have made such plans over and again a hundred times, and yet I doubt if I shall ever be able to carry them into effect. Since I came out of prison I have tried to live and to behave like other people, but I am bored and disgusted and unsatisfied while I am doing it. I am not myself when living like this. When I go to the pictures, more often than not I get up and come out long before the end, because I can't stand it any longer. And I feel relieved as soon as I am out in the street again. What do I care for petty jokes and love stories on the screen, while thousands of our best people are being ill-treated in concentration camps—ill-treated and driven to madness, like Werner! One day I went to a dance. They all seemed to be enjoying themselves. But I could not get rid of the idea that the dance hall was a prison yard, and that the dancers were convicts gone mad. Dancing couples of madmen with waxlike limbs and stiff necks, and grinning faces. There were some in uniforms, S.A. men and S.S. men—they were the prison guards—dancing prison guards. I was stunned with horror. I ran away, with the blood hammering in my ears, and I wondered if I had gone mad already—like Werner!

I am not interested in novels. They always make so much fuss about minor affairs, all sorts of little troubles and squabbles. Sometimes I play chess with my brother when he comes home from work; but I cannot concentrate, it is all of so little consequence. At the office where I am now working they complain that I am often absent-minded and that I do not seem interested in the business. But why on earth should I be interested in business transactions in the hosiery trade? Everybody can go without stockings for the rest of their lives for all I care.

I know all too well that love, business and entertainment will never fill my life while this most terrible of wars is raging on the battlefield of freedom, while a whole generation is

perishing in mind and body in the very midst of our glorious mechanised civilisation. How can people be happy in this huge concentration camp which is Germany to-day?

But it is more than that I cannot be happy. I do not know how to live in it at all. I cannot tear myself away from our old conceptions, because the world is what we believed it to be, and I cannot forget those who work and suffer for our common cause. When I hear aeroplanes purring overhead I seem to see the children playing in the streets transformed into little blackened carcasses. I see the mask of death behind these marching troops who go out to kill and to die for the greater glory of their executioners. When they pass in their torchlight processions it seems to me that they are going out to set the world on fire, and above their singing I seem to hear the screams of their tortured victims. And however compact their formations, they never blot out the silent, hurrying shadows of those hundreds of thousands who have been driven away and are homeless.

You will understand me, because you too returned, you too were unable to forget. We cannot tear ourselves away from the fate of the dumb millions, the exploited, the deceived, the oppressed.

I cannot tear myself away. And yet how can I return to our work, while the dreadful shadow of Werner is haunting me? It would deprive me of all self-assuredness, and it would poison our comradeship.

. . . . .

He stopped, looking at me expectantly. What did he want me to say? He probably did not know himself. But I felt there was little I could do.

"Do you ever think of Karl?" I asked him at last.

He nodded his head emphatically. Of course he thought of Karl.

"You know," I said, "that Karl is a Jew. It was clear from the outset, to him as well as to the rest of us, that if he took part in our work he would have to pay even more dearly than anyone else if they ever caught him. And he could easily have emigrated had he chosen to. Yet he remained, and few were

as active as he was. And when they did catch him at last, and subjected him to the usual treatment, he remained upright and serene as ever. You know better than I that there was no trace of despondency about him when he faced the court, which was not at all unlikely to pass sentence of death on him. He did not falter when he was convicted to fifteen years' penal servitude. And the legend of his indomitable fearlessness has penetrated the prison walls and reached us and many others, inside Germany and abroad, and inspired us with new hope and confidence. You know that too, don't you? Why is it that Karl's memory is so much less firmly entrenched in your mind than that of Werner? Why do you not trust that under like circumstances you will be like Karl rather than Werner?

"Millions of men are now mobilised to fight the battle which we failed to win. Any of the horrors which the soldier sees happening to his comrades may come to him at any moment, and he knows it. And yet he has to stick to his post."

At this, Herbert interrupted me violently:

"If only I could fight the Nazis in the open field—I should not be afraid of that. But we have to remain in the dark, we have to practise pretence and deception. And there is nothing to make us fight on except our own determination and fortitude. I would sooner be a soldier."

"I can understand that," I replied. "But there is this which gives us an advantage over most soldiers: we know more clearly, more definitely, why we are fighting and who is our enemy. And we are more firmly convinced too that as long as that enemy exists we cannot live without fighting. If we fall we die as we have lived. Do you really find it so much more difficult to live in accordance with your convictions?"

When we parted that day I knew that Herbert was not going to give up the struggle.

CHAPTER X

IN EXILE

I KNOW YOU CANNOT understand why I am sorry I had to leave Germany. The other day a friend showed me a letter I had written him several years ago, when I went abroad for the first time. He thought this letter would indicate the change that had taken place in me in the course of the last few years. But the contrary is true.

Here is the letter:

". . . I do hope I shall soon be able to go back. No doubt it does me good to relax a bit from the constant tension in which we live over there, to be somewhat more carefree and detached. But if you want me to be quite frank, I must admit that I am here with only half my heart. Still —I am glad I have more leisure now for reflection about the deeper problems of our work. You know, over there, one does not really get a chance to do that. One is eaten up by the petty details of the daily struggle. And yet I long to return to that struggle; and not only because I know that they need me over there. It is more than this. There is danger and responsibility—but there is also a different atmosphere, a cleaner atmosphere. You know who is your enemy and who is your friend. Out here it is different. I like to fight in the open. And that I can do better in Germany. Of course, I cannot show myself openly before the enemy. But of those to whom I can show myself at all I know that they are in the fight wholeheartedly; they are the sort of people with whom one can go through thick and thin, and to whom one can speak one's mind. It is a healthier atmosphere than that of exile."

You cannot understand this, I know. You wonder why the greater liberty which we enjoy in this country does not make

us feel at ease after having lived for so long under the dreadful strain of Nazi Germany. All I can say is that we did not come here in order to feel at ease. We did not leave Germany for the sake of our own personal safety and comfort. We left Germany so as to continue from outside the struggle which we began inside. And in many ways we find it more difficult out here to find a place for ourselves in the fight against the Nazi tyranny.

In Germany we form a front against the Nazis. We were at war with the Nazis for seven years before this greater war began. We are absolutely distinct from the Nazis, and all our energies are concentrated on the fight against them. Everything we do is done with the purpose of defeating them. *That* constitutes the atmosphere in which we live, and that fills our lives. We are confronted with an immense task, and we know that everyone of us is needed, and every ounce of our strength. We know that each single day's task may mean the difference between victory and defeat. We know that our efforts may one day bear ample fruit, and we know that we are doing our job.

Out here—what are we out here? Aliens. Primarily *aliens*. We are a particularly low class of aliens even—we are *refugees* —people, that is, who have been defeated. To you we are people who have no home, no work, no immediate use or purpose, people who live mainly in the hope of things to come. Here we are the very opposite of what we were in Germany.

And even that is not all. Not only are we aliens and refugees —we are actually *Germans*.

In Germany this never occurred to me. It seemed to matter so little. What mattered there was that we were in the anti-Nazi front, fighting against the Nazis. And fight we did. Outside I am exposed to the reproach of being a member of the people that spreads death, destitution and despair all over the world.

I know you don't need to be reminded of this. I know you are not narrow-minded, and I know that to you I am an ally in the fight against Hitlerism. And don't think I am not grateful to you for making a distinction between a German and a Nazi.

But how long will people who are less enlightened than you continue to make this distinction?

You don't need to reassure me that I am not responsible for the crimes which Hitler commits. I have a very clear conscience in that respect. I have fought against the Hitler gang ever since it began to be a menace to Germany and the outside world. But I do not believe that in the long run this will save me from being lumped together, in the eyes of the general public, with Nazis and the other German imperialists.

And yet—the difference between us German anti-Fascists and the German Nazis is more fundamental even than that between the Nazis and their present enemies-in-arms. I know the Nazis so much better than you do, and I have been in so much closer contact with the roots of the evil than you have. For you have only watched from the distance, as one watches wild beasts in the Zoo, the other side of ditches and iron bars. You realise the ferocity of a wild beasts much better when you are on the same side of the bars. . . . To you it is all rather bewildering, absolutely incomprehensible how these hordes of ruthless barbarians could gain a foothold in the very heart of civilised Europe, destroying and trampling underfoot all vestiges of human culture. To us who lived in the country where Hitler came to power, the process was no less horrifying, but it was certainly less surprising. You see—I have watched some of my own former friends, schoolmates and workmates become Nazis. I have lived and grown up under the very conditions which made Hitler's rise possible. And I have watched the country go down into the jungle.

I do not want you to misunderstand me. I am not of the opinion that circumstances compelled the Germans to turn to the Nazis; that they were not really given a choice.

For you are never compelled to become a scoundrel. We all lived under the same conditions. That we did not all become Nazis proves that such conditions are not compelling, it shows that everybody is still responsible for his own actions, that no man was forced to become a Nazi. And many did not become Nazis; and have resisted the Nazis to the best of their ability. The concentration camps as well as the Exile

bear witness of a better Germany. But we who lived in Germany during and after Hitler's rise to power are better able to understand how it was that a great many people offered no resistance and allowed themselves to be drawn into the Nazi net. There are many people who always allow themselves to drift to and fro on the sea of circumstances. You are capable of offering resistance only if you have something of your own that is not subject to changing circumstances, that is not itself floating on the waves. You may call it a conviction or a moral consciousness or an idea. Only those who have such a moral consciousness are capable of withstanding the pull and push of events; only they can truly be called personalities. But many people are not personalities at all; they are only a function of conditions which are beyond their control, and when conditions tend towards the jungle, they simply follow the dictate of the hour. I do not deny, of course, that everybody is influenced by his environment; indeed those who are not merely instruments of their environment may be all the more strongly affected by it. You feel the power of the tide when you try to swim against it.

I suppose it seems odd to you that any tide, however strong, should have carried the mass of the people to Nazism. You think of your own people and you are confident that their sense of decency, their traditions, the ordinary man's desire for freedom and independence, and last, but not least, their very laziness would protect them from the Nazi virus.

Conditions may well be different here. I don't really know much about Britain. But as far as Germany is concerned, conditions were such that they were almost bound to turn people into brigands. You think laziness might have saved them? But the Germans are not lazy. There are few peoples so industrious. Their urge for independence? But they hate being independent. They like marching in formation and obeying orders. Their social structure and traditions? Where are they? The past is to them a useless shell which they have outgrown and which they cast off gladly. And what can be the value of their social system to a people who returned after four years of war to an exhausted, ruined and demoralised homeland,

whom inflation deprived of the fruits of their own and their parents' labours, and for whom repeated economic crises have spelt unemployment, insecurity and loss of social status? What could have turned them from the path to the jungle except the resistance offered by their own moral consciousness? And hardly ever can circumstances have done more to destroy man's moral consciousness than in these twenty-five years which lie between the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars. Our fathers were taught to ravage neighbouring lands and to live in the midst of dirt, hunger and death; our mothers learned to disregard law and order to save their children from starvation. That most of us are alive at all is indeed a tribute to the dissolution of our social order; we are alive because our mothers were prepared to resort to fraud, smuggling and bribery to obtain food to fill our empty stomachs.

When the war came to its end, the turmoil did not cease, nor did the hunger end. Germany had lost the war, but although she was utterly exhausted, she refused to admit that she had been defeated, and every clause of the Peace Treaty aroused only indignation and the will to sabotage. A new Republic had been created, but it was doomed from the very outset, because the masses of the people were never rallied in its support, and none of the big parties really believed in the new State. What was the Republic other than the administration of defeat, the arena for a struggle between parties which meant to succeed the Republic, the screen behind which the foundations were laid of a new Germany which was to break the Armistice and win the lost war. Those who actually believed in the Republic were regarded almost as the objects of ridicule.

The Labour Movement?

It was routed by unemployment—mass unemployment. And unemployment means more than poverty—at least to the German. Work is more than a means to an end to the German. It is the essence of his life—work as such. Without work he is wasted—the whole of his life is wasted. So when millions were unemployed in Germany it meant more than misery. It meant utter despair. And just as in the World War

our mothers ceased to care where they got food so long as they could feed their children somehow, so the unemployed ceased to care in what way work was to be provided, and at what price, if only they need no longer linger about uselessly.

Such was the society in which we grew up. It was not a structure in which we could find a place for ourselves, or which we could adapt to our needs. There was nothing in it which we accepted just because it existed or because our parents had accepted it before us. What they left us we viewed with suspicion. When they spoke to us of the good old days they always meant the times which ended about when we were born, and they found little to commend to us in the present world. At school we either learned openly to defy the new State, or watched our teachers do so more or less openly. At the school, where I was educated, the Headmaster, a servant of the Republic, paid out of public funds, could not bring himself to fly the Republican colours on the school house on occasions when flags were to be shown, and he chose to hoist the municipal arms instead. To us the Republic was the permanent symbol of political and economic crisis.

Not only did we fail to see any true values in the society in which we lived, we were actually taught to deny the very existence of such values, and to deride as old-fashioned dreamers those who refused to accept as indisputable the proposition that "everything is relative." This was the philosophy which paved the way for the Nazis' cynical disregard of all rights and ideals, for the mysticism of blood and soil, or whatever else they may use to give divine sanction to their rule of brute force.

Such, then, was the world in which we grew up, without stability, economic, political or moral, and many of us had never remembered a time which was not one of crisis. Thus, when the crisis became ever more desperate, the conviction gained ground that "things could not go on like this." And this conviction was in fact the Nazis' opportunity. Nobody but the Nazis seemed to offer an alternative. And the alternative which the Nazis offered, and which won them millions

of adherents, was condensed into the simple slogan: "Everything must be completely changed." To everybody this implied a promise of relief of his own troubles, and moreover it accorded with the desperate nihilism of our generation.

I believe that this explains to some extent why no resistance was offered to the Nazis when they made their way to power and why they were even received with open arms in a good many quarters. It is true that many people have become the victims of their own miscalculations. It is wrong, however, to think that the whole nation has been disillusioned and is ready to turn against the Nazis. The reason is that the Nazis have actually accomplished three things which from the outset disarmed all effective resistance. First of all they provided work for the unemployed as they had promised—never mind at what price, never mind who had to pay the price. You might study economics and statistics and discover that the reduction of real wages and social services made it possible to put millions to work practically at their own expense; that people were made to do forced labour; that they were set to produce implements of destruction which were sure to land us in yet another war. You might tell the German people all this. Many would believe it, and even feel uneasy about it. Yet more often than not they would only shrug their shoulders. What they wanted was work. And they had got it. And even had they become poorer when they ceased to be on the dole, they would feel happier none the less. They wanted work for its own sake. They needed it more urgently than freedom, and so they accepted it at the price of freedom. They were given more and more work, more than they really wanted, more almost than they were physically able to perform. But they suffered less from overwork than they had from unemployment. They would rather be overworked. They fear nothing so much as unemployment.

This is a factor which you must never forget when you try to assess the morale of the people of Germany. You imagine that you can tempt them to prefer such a state of affairs as exists in Britain to German Nazi rule, because of the freedom which the British people enjoy. But Goebbels need only quote a few

figures about permanent mass unemployment in Britain, and a large number of people will turn away from the temptation. What is freedom to them without work?

If you are out to win the German people over to your side, if, that is to say, you really want to win their sympathies, you have to show them that you are capable of dealing with this problem of unemployment.

Maybe you can defeat the Nazis by purely military means. You may be able to win the war that way. But if you want to win the peace of Europe you must be able to abolish unemployment.

Many who were disappointed with Hitler's domestic policy derived a great deal of satisfaction for their national pride from his foreign policy. We have discussed this already. The third factor which kept the Nazis in power was the terror.

Terrorism is effective in two ways: by its actual application and by the publicity it is given. I believe the second effect of the terror is too often disregarded. When you hear of it, it arouses your indignation, naturally. You imagine that it is bound to make those who are still indifferent into enemies of the régime, into passionate opponents. But is this really so? In the majority of cases it has quite a different effect. It has the effect of making you mute for fear of arousing the anger of the terrorists; you become more careful, you keep away from anyone who might be suspect to the terrorists. The feeling of indignation is supreme only in those in whom a feeling for Right and Justice is alive—and they are as a rule people who need no further evidence against the Nazis. In the others, fear tends to outweigh indignation. Of course, they are shocked by the terror. But then, they argue, it is really people's own fault if they get into trouble. Why will they persist in running their heads against a wall? Why can't they see facts as they are? Why won't they realise that conditions are what they are, and that they can do nothing about it? Every additional example of the terror increases their fear, and even tends to lessen their indignation, because, after all, these fools *ought* to have learned from experience, and timidity gradually comes to be called by the name of wisdom. And then it is more effective than ever before.

Let there be no mistake about it—all the reports about Nazi atrocities which were circulated in Germany and abroad tended to play into the hands of the Nazis. Instead of rousing people to form a united front against the barbarians, these reports did much to make them acquiesce. And not only among the Germans themselves. People in other countries as well have been very prone to yield to threats of terror. Long before Hitler became Chancellor, many people in Germany began to take care not to show too openly that they were anti-Nazi. You never knew what might happen one day, they would argue, and their fear led them to withdraw their support from the Republic when it was most in need of it. Thus they actually helped Hitler to assume control of the State. And what did people in other countries do when they witnessed the barbarian onslaught gathering strength? They too yielded to their cowardice which they tried to disguise as their love of peace, democracy and neutrality; they too helped to bring about our present plight. It is said of the German peasants in the Middle Ages that over their doorways they put up inscriptions saying: "Good St. Florian, protect our house; set our neighbour's on fire instead." Who can deny that this has become the guiding principle of our enlightened age?

I believe that you and many of your people are only now beginning to realise the full frightfulness of the terror. You have heard a lot about it before, it is true. Many books and many articles have been published which contained much of the truth, but I believe you are right when you say that your imagination failed you and that that is why, in spite of their many acts of barbarism, you believed you might come to terms with the Nazis.

I am not convinced, however, that people would have acted differently if their imagination had not failed them so. I doubt if the conscience of the world, that mysterious power to which so many appeals have been addressed in vain, would have been aroused. I have lost faith in this world conscience, because it can only be a sum of individual consciences, and they have proved so silent during these years.

Still—you are right; people's imagination did fail them in

face of the Nazi horrors, and the more they were told about these horrors the further they were from realising the extent of the truth? Do you know what I believe to be the reason? I believe that with the whole truth in their minds they would have been unable to rest, they would have been unable complacently to accept the restraining influence of their so-called wisdom, they would have been bound to see the danger and to arm against it before it was too late. And there would have been no talk of neutrality towards men who were threatening the very foundations of human civilisation.

We have all read books and seen pictures describing the horrors of the World War. And yet we have eliminated the details from our minds; we could not have lived our lives with these pictures before our eyes of the suffering and brutalising, the physical and moral decomposition that men underwent in war. We thought we knew what it meant. But we refused to carry the actual picture of it in our minds; we tried to forget. I know that we have all had the same experience, and it helps us to understand why no stand was made against the Nazis at a time when such opposition would not have meant a world war. What you heard of conditions in concentration camps, or for that matter of conditions anywhere in the Third Reich—its oppression, persecution, bribery and corruption, denunciation and personal cruelty—it must have been as incredible and as horrible to you as the truth about the war. You were told a lot, you were shocked—but you did not really grasp it. It is the same with so many people who during these years have been in touch with considerable numbers of victims of the Nazi terror. They ought to know what conditions are in Germany; but every time you tell them about these conditions they seem to be surprised and shocked anew. Doesn't that indicate that they have never quite grasped the truth about the state of affairs under Nazi rule?

This surprised me at first. Then I thought about it, and now I believe that the reaction to these stories is quite natural. People cannot bear the whole weight of the truth on their minds, carrying it constantly about with them. So they discard some of it; they jettison it like excessive ballast. They

do not do it purposely, they do not even notice that they are doing it. But they have to do it in order to preserve their peace of mind. And in preserving their peace of mind they have helped to surrender the peace of the world.

Do not think that I want to pronounce a rash verdict on other people. I do not believe that selfish cowardice is alone responsible for the inadequacy of people's imagination. The very extremity of Nazi frightfulness is itself beyond human imagination. It surpasses the imagination, not only of those who have steadily refused to admit that the minds of their rulers could be governed by any but noble motives; even those of us who try to take a sober view of human progress and human nature are reluctant to believe in a human force which deliberately and systematically strives solely for evil ends. The Devil was always regarded as a being from another world, and his appearance on our earth was never expected nor believed. And even we who have seen him in action, even we are reluctant to believe in him. Even we whose lives have been filled with the fight against evil tend to forget. Yes, indeed, even those of our comrades who have been in prison and in concentration camps discover to their amazement that they tend to forget scenes which they expected to have before their eyes, in all their horrible detail, for the rest of their lives. They too and all of us tend to force these things out of our consciousness because it is not wide enough to bear the whole horror; we should have no room to breathe otherwise. We are not great enough always to bear in mind the truth about the world in which we live. We surrender ourselves to illusions. Our illusions help us to find the breathing space we seek. But it exists only in our imagination. We escape from reality into a world of mists and we never face the real issues. And because we do not face them we fail to find their solution. And as long as we find no solution we are helpless and desperate and unable to vanquish the enemy.

It is time therefore that we begin to face realities, and the issues confronting us to-day and to-morrow.